



# Intangible Heritage of Jammu



Jammu and Kashmir  
Academy of Art, Culture and Languages



# **Intangible Heritage of Jammu**

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## Foreword

**J**&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages has always been in the forefront of all initiatives of documentation of the rich wealth of our art, heritage, literature and culture for its preservation and appreciation far and wide. Though, so far the Academy has successfully come out with a number of ambitious projects and publications fulfilling its constitutional responsibilities, there was a dire need for unconventional interventions to preserve some undocumented areas of our art, literature and culture. In the face of the threat of extinction of indigenous cultures due to many socio-cultural reasons, unprecedented initiatives were required. It is with this sense of cultural urgency that we decided to publish full-fledged projects on Intangible Heritage of Jammu and Intangible Heritage of Kashmir separately. The projects are attempts at documenting this less-explored dimension of our cultural legacy. The purpose is to document and preserve it for posterity, besides familiarising our young generation with our rich and vibrant legacy. The attempt is the first of its kind and cannot be called comprehensive but the compiler has tried to include as many topics as he could. The result is this compendium of Jammu's intangible heritage, that is a classic by all standards. There might be some shortcomings but the fact is that it is the first of its kind. What is important is that this critically important compilation has been brought out to at least preserve the semblance of the topics considered to be gone forever.



I am highly thankful to the learned scholar and researcher Dr Lalit Gupta who painstakingly took up such an arduous project and completed it within the stipulated time with all relevant minutiae. Though the project took more than the expected time to print for some technical reasons, I feel highly elated to finally place it before our valued readers.

I am also thankful to the reviewers of the manuscript who helped us make it better in terms of quality.

I also place on record my appreciation for Dr Abid Ahmad, Editor English in the Academy, and project coordinator, for professionally editing the manuscript.

**Aziz Hajini**  
Secretary



## Editorial Note

**H**eritage is an ever-living reality that does not die with time. It lives on through various modes of perpetuation including those of word and deed. Heritage is not just hardware visible only to the physical eye, but encompasses our attitude to life, our modes of living and the existential choices we make through the thick and thin of life. Heritage is an eternity that lives through our practice.

Though our obsession with a mechanical lifestyle has ruined the softer side of life, but equally noticeable is our thirst for our lost soul through our concern and love for heritage and culture. The consoling factor is that the budding generation is becoming more aware of the critical importance of heritage and culture.

Recent times have contributed a lot in sensitizing us more towards the finer aspects of heritage and culture including its technical classification. Traditionally the heritage was restricted to the realms usually believed to be tangible, but now intangible heritage has assumed an equal status. While tangible heritage is what is tangible, touchable, intangible heritage is something that lies beyond tangible heritage. Intangible heritage is broadly defined as “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted



from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.”

Intangible heritage includes such heritage sites as creation myths, mythology, legends, songs, music, dance, drama, skills, cuisine, crafts, festivals, etc. It is not any physical form but can be recognized through some physical expression only. Interestingly, this heritage is believed to be the living heritage and the mainspring of humanity's cultural diversity. Its preservation is the guarantee of creative expressions of human society. Therefore, its cultural importance is existential and non-negotiable. However, as much its importance, so less is the attention paid to it.

That way, the present volume is critically important. It covers the multifaceted dimensions of the intangible heritage of the Jammu region of our state in a very professional and scholarly manner. It is also a brilliant attempt at preserving many long-forgotten dimensions of our rich intangible heritage. The volume has been compiled by one of the celebrated scholars, researchers and writers of our state, Dr Lalit Gupta who deserves all accolades for compiling this comprehensive compendium on the intangible heritage of Jammu.

The book is the first of its kind and cannot be called complete. But it is rich in detail and is a milestone towards documenting the intangible heritage of Jammu. There might be some overlapping which is inevitable in view of the technical definitions involved. There are some topics which cannot be literally categorized as intangible but they

come in the larger gamut of the definition of the term and make a necessary corollary to it. They have been retained as contained in the manuscript. Therefore some amount of repetition is obvious in such a publication. The book is a part of the two-volume project, the other part being on Intangible Heritage of Kashmir.

**Abid Ahmad**



## Introduction

**I**n addition to ancient monuments, palaces, havelies, temples, mosques and other architectural achievements, Jammu's cultural heritage manifests itself in rituals, rites, customs, belief systems, socio-cultural practices, cuisine, traditional knowledge and human skills. They, while giving identity and distinction to its different regions and communities, also act as the character and individuality of all its races and ethnic groups.

Jammu—a conglomerate of ethnic groups: Dogras, Paharis, Gujjars, Punjabis and religious communities such as Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists and Christians—boasts of an age-old rich legacy which informs the day to day life of its inhabitants as a matter of social conventions and markers of ethnic identity in cycles of ceremonies, rituals and rites observed from birth to death ranging from the mundane to the sacred.

But this world where man has through the ages woven an organic relationship with the environment; its flora and fauna, an understanding of variety of materials and skills fashioned in light of unquestioned old-world beliefs in umpteen nature spirits and many other benign and malefic beings, is in peril. Globalization and social transformation have given rise to gross and hasty changes, leading to deterioration and disappearance of this age old cultural heritage.

Cultural heritage being synonymous our of living culture includes traditions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants such as oral traditions, performing



arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe as well as the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.

This all encompassing world of living expressions which we take for granted, includes the folklore and language, mythology, customs and rituals, worship, medicine and local health practices, wisdom keeping and knowledge holding, human treasures—master craftsmanship, ancient educational traditions, relationship with nature and environment, oral traditions, music and dance, musical instruments, paintings and murals, body painting and tattooing, folk /tribal art, crafts and skills, traditional craftsmanship including traditional textiles, handicrafts from wood, stone, papier-mâché, or metal works, basketry, house decoration, indigenous architecture, building patterns, food and drinks, costumes and jewelry, beauty culture including hair styles, pottery and utensils, traditional forms of greetings and hospitality, rituals of birth, death and marriage, traditional games and sports, magic, witchcraft, occult practices, shamanism, cosmology and philosophy, festivals and fairs.

The great treasure of traditional knowledge, transmitted by word of mouth rather than through written texts from one generation to another—which had been taken for granted as part of living culture, today is in danger of being treated as irrelevant. For culture to be kept alive, it must remain relevant to change and be regularly practised within communities and from. But the fast changing socio-cultural realities of the modern life have increasingly closeted people to an indoor existence where virtual reality is far emerging as the readymade reference for everything outside one's home and hearth. It has pushed the inherited culture to the periphery.



The new generation, especially those born and bred in urban centers are caught up in upward mobility, fast drifting from their immediate environment and hardly having any idea about their surroundings, land, customs and rituals. Unlike their counterparts in rural and hilly areas of Jammu, they are blank about the wide varieties of forest products, medicinal properties of ordinary looking shrubs in one's courtyard, a time-honored dance performance, a song, a music instrument or a craft.

Unlike the efforts to safeguard their cultural heritage by other traditional societies, we in Jammu and Kashmir seem to be blissfully ignorant about the importance of our cultural inheritance and the role it plays in intercultural dialogue and the encouragement of mutual respect for other ways of life.

In our state the showcasing of folk music and crafts in cultural shows and craft *melas* leads to haphazard measures in safeguarding and managing our heritage. Such an approach to a constantly changing 'living culture' amounts to freezing and trivializing it. The focus is on production of dances, songs, music and crafts, rather than ensuring the continuance of the processes involved in transmission or communicating culture from generation to generation.

Safeguarding means making sure that our cultural heritage remains an active part of life for today's generation so that it can hand it over to tomorrow's generation. For that we need to ensure its viability, its continuous recreation and transmission. Initiatives for safeguarding include identifying and documenting heritage, research, preservation, promotion, enhancement or transmission of it – particularly through formal and non-formal education. Protecting our cultural heritage is also an important source of economic development. It is not necessarily through tourism



only. Instead the focus should be on continuity of our cultural heritage within society and promoting its mainstreaming in policy planning.

Just as monuments and works of art are identified and collected, our cultural heritage should also be recorded. In fact, for a State, the first step in safeguarding is to identify those expressions and manifestation that can be considered cultural heritage and making inventory of them. These inventories may then serve as basis for developing measures for the manifestation and expression of our cultural heritage. The communities themselves must take part in identifying and defining their cultural heritage- they are the one who decide which practices are parts of their cultural heritage.

It is high time that the government chalk out a comprehensive plan to identify and define such heritage with the participation of communities, groups and relevant non-Governmental organizations so as to make a comprehensive list of State's Cultural Heritage. This List is most important, since it aims at taking appropriate safeguarding measures for those expressions of cultural heritage whose continuous recreation and transmission are threatened.

**Dr Lalit Gupta**



# Myths and Legends of Jammu

## 1. Jammu in Historical Perspective

The region of Jammu—known in the Puranas as *Darva-Abhisara* and situated between the ancient *janapadas*: *Madhya Desha* on the one hand and the *Kashmir mandala* and *Gandhara* on the other—has been one of the most active meeting point for diverse religious and socio-cultural beliefs and traditions since ancient times.

The region has been inhabited by races from the hoary past such as *Pishacha*, *Naga*, *Kinnara*, *Gandharva*, along with races from an early historic period like *Audumbara*, *Madra*, *Vahlika*, *Darva*, *Abhisara*, *Yavana*, *Saumantikas*, etc. A flow of culture in Jammu is seen in archaeological, historical and cultural evidences right from the Paleolithic period to the Indus Valley Culture, through Indo-Greek, Mauryan, Kushana and Gupta eras, early medieval kingdoms, formation of Rajput states, Mughal supremacy, period of Afghan dominance till the end of the British rule.

Like other traditional societies, many etiological myths or origin myths and legends are associated with Jammu region's mountains, caves, lakes, rivers, places of pilgrimage and number of old settlements, historic cities and towns. Besides the usages of certain terms that describe the present-day popular geographical features, settlements, place names and ethnic labels in Jammu region are also recounted in legends as part of oral culture.

## 2. Duggar

The ancient and popular name of Jammu region is *Duggar Desh*; the region which spreads through lower Himalayan



mountain ranges of Shivaliks. The name *Durgara* or *Duggar* State— from which the people of the region also take their name *Dogras*—finds its first mention in inscriptions of two copper-plate title deeds in Chamba, issued in the mid 11<sup>th</sup> century recording events which must have taken place in the early part of the 10<sup>th</sup> century in the reign of Sahial Varman (930-950 CE)<sup>2</sup>. With the establishment of the rule of Dogra Rajput Kings around 9<sup>th</sup> century CE, the region achieved a political unity with overall development of a socio-cultural environment, the remnants of which can be seen in the existing stone temples dating from the 9th-10th century CE, which are mostly located on an ancient trade route.

According to Imperial Gazetteer of India the origin of the word *Dogra* is said to have arisen from the fact that the cradle of Dogra people lies between two lakes of Sruinsar and Mansar. In course of time the word *Dwigarta Desh* (country of two hollows) was converted into *Duggar* and *Dugara*, which then became *Dogra*. Various views have been expressed about the origin of the word *Durgar* from *Dvigarta*. Other epithets for this land of *Dogras* are *Durgha*, *Dungar* and *Durga*. The last one corroborated by a Chamba copper plate inscription of the 11<sup>th</sup> century seems plausible. Descendants of the Dev dynasty ruled over the region since 9<sup>th</sup> century including rulers like Maldev (c. 1370), Ranjitdev (Raja of Jammu-circa 1725/1735—1780) and the dynasty of Maharaja Gulab Singh who was crowned on the bank of Chenab at Akhnoor on 17 June 1822 by Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab. It was Gulab Singh who extended the boundaries of what came to be called as the modern state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The area of *Duggar* from river Ravi to Jhelum and beyond



formed a big cultural unit in medieval times and included the entire Jammu region lying south of Pir Panjal, some parts of Himachal Pradesh, viz. Kangra, Chamba, Kullu, Mandi, Suket, some parts of Punjab, viz. Gurdaspur, Pathankot, Nurpur, Hoshiarpur, and the parts that are now in Pakistan viz. Shakargarh tehsil of Sialkot and so on.

Not only does the contiguous areas of Himachal Pradesh bordering Jammu Shivaliks have a common language but also cultural practices that were further strengthened by matrimonial alliances between royal families as well as common folks. There is sharing of common ritual and religious practices, worship of folk deities such as *Naga devtas*, *Raja Mandalik*, *Kul Devtas*, erection of memorial and ancestor stones, festivals, music, dress and cuisine.

### 3. Myth about Jammu

The most popular legend about Jammu relates to its founding by *Raja Jambu Lochan* in the hoary past. As per this legend *Jambu Lochan* and his brother *Bahu Lochan*, were descendants of *Maharaja Sudarshan* who ruled Ayodhya in 1600 BCE<sup>3</sup>. *Maharaja Sudarshan* who belonged to the lineage of Kush, the son of Rama, had two sons-*Agnibaran* and *Agnigir* or *Agnigar*.

It is said that after the death of *Maharaja Sudarshan*, *Agnibaran* succeeded him while *Agnigar*, along with his aides, left home and moved westward into mountains of northern India and married daughter of the king of *Nagar kot* (present day Kangra). He crossed the River Ravi and founded a small kingdom around present day Kathua. His son and successor, *Vayubaran*, extended the limits of the kingdom farther up to River Ujjh. Some generations later *Bahu Lochan*, elder brother of *Jambu Lochan*, took the entire



region around River Tawi under his control and established a formidable kingdom with its capital as *Bahu Nagar* on the east bank of River Tawi.

In a battle against *Chandrasahs*, the king of Punjab, *Bahu Lochan* was killed. His younger brother *Jambu Lochan* took charge of the state and initiated the expansion of his domain. According to an oral tradition it was Raja *Jambu Lochan* who founded city of Jammu in 14<sup>th</sup> century BCE. During one of his hunting expeditions on right bank of River Tawi, he saw a goat and a lion drinking water side by side. What surprised him most was that after quenching their thirst, the animals quietly went their own ways.

The Raja abandoned the idea of hunting and returned to his companions and recounted to them what he had seen. Since *Jambu Lochan* had never seen such an amazing scene before, he became curious to unravel this mysterious incident. He contacted some wise people in the region to find out the truth. They informed the king that in their region, there was complete harmony among the people. Nobody thought of snatching the property of others. There is a healthy tradition among the people for each other's rights and freedom. The effect of human beings leading such a pious and austere life also rubs the animals in the region. The mystery was thus unfolded, the king considered his chance arrival at that place of tranquility as a divine direction to build his capital at the location. In due course of time the city which he founded became known as *Jambu-Nagar* and later on as Jammu.

Some people in Jammu mention the existence of the kingdom of *Dhara Nagari* in the environs of the city of Jammu across the Tawi to the east where on the hillock stands the temple of *Mahamaya*. The legend says Bikramajit ruled here...<sup>4</sup>.



#### 4. Myths about Nagas

The widespread worship of *Nagas* as part of the snake-cultic traditions in different parts of India has also been a characteristic feature of religious beliefs of people of western Himalayas especially that of Jammu and Kashmir since pre-historic times.

#### 5. Myths of Basak (Vasuki) Naga

Vasuki Naga called Basak in Dogri, Vasank in Kashmiri is an immortal Naga of Pan-Indian serpent-lore. This serpent deity has special cultural significance for the state of Jammu and Kashmir as the mythological accounts establish a hoary link between Kashmir and Jammu.

According to mythological accounts, *Naga* Chiefs ruled over their subjects when the Kashmir valley was a lake. But one water-borne dragon named *Jallobdhava* started killing and eating *Nagas* living in the lake. The result was many *Nagas* and their subjects migrated in different directions for safety. Some *Nagas* went to contiguous areas of Kishtwar and Bhadarwah. Kishtwar at that time was a lake called *Gordhansar* spreading from *Singhpura* up to *Thathri*.

According to another myth, after the death of *Kashyap Rishi*, the succession dispute started amongst his sons born from his two queens *Kadru* and *Vanita*. From *Vanita*, *Garuda* was born, while *Kadru* gave birth to 100 children including *Vasuki Naga*, *Shesh Naga* and *Mahel Naga* and their elder sister queen *Bhadra* (*Bhaderkali*).

In a family feud, *Garuda* the eldest son along with his supporters attempted to eliminate *Vasuki* and his brothers. *Bhaderkali* had already shifted to Bhadarwah and settled there as ruling queen. She extended an invitation to *Vasuki*



and his brothers to come to Bhadarwah for safety. All the three brothers went and settled at Bhadarwah. *Garuda* followed them but could not locate them. *Bhadra* divided her territory amongst the three brothers. The main Bhadarwah valley on the left bank of river *Neeru* was given to *Vasuki* locally called *Basak Naga*, the territory on the right was given to *Shesh Naga* locally known as *Sabar Naga* and the periphery areas touching Bhalesa and Marmet were given to *Mahel Naga*. The temples of these *Naga* brothers are located at conspicuous places in these areas, where many local people worship them as *kul devta* (family/lineage deities).

The memory of the migration of *Vasuki Naga* from Kashmir to the mountain valleys around mount Kailash or Kaplash of Bhadarwah region is alive in folk lore associated with *Vasuki Naga*. The folk tales speak of *Vasuki Naga's* escape from Kashmir, stay at Bhadarwah, his pursuit by *Garuda*, and his refuge in *Kaplash Lake*.

In Kashmir, there are still many springs which are associated with the name of *Vasuki Naga*. One such spring *Vasak Nag*, also known as *Sarsa* is located in the erstwhile *Devsar Pargana* at the base of a mountain near *Wagam* in *Kund* area near *Qazigund* in South Kashmir. The spring flows for six months and runs dry for six months. A week before it begins to flow the wind blows very hard, there are rain and thunder storms, and people of the area say, "Vasak Nag is coming". As soon as the autumn irrigation of the paddy fields is over and the crops are ripe, it runs dry.

As per the folk belief, this spring, is the residing place of *Vasuki*, who in winter months moves across the *Pir Panjal* (to appear in a spring at Bhadarwah) and after six months at the onset of spring season, returns to Kashmir.



## 6. Myth of Bhadarwah

As per the myths the name of Bhadarwah was *Bhadarakashi* before the coming of *Nagas*. The place where they settled in *Bhadarkashi* was village which now is called *Gatha* (ancient *Ghoshta*) and has a grand temple of *Basak Naga*. The present day location of the temple is said to be the site of a *Dramman* (a small piece of plain ground in hilly/highland areas) with a cluster of Deodar trees.

A family of *Diddhan* caste lived nearby and their herd of cows used to rest in that cluster of Deodar trees. When one of the cows started giving less milk, the old lady of the family, followed the cow to the tree-cluster and found her standing near an old tree with a hollow. A *Naga* came out of the hole and started drinking the milk from cow's udder and then went back inside the tree-hole. In the evening, the old lady narrated the entire episode to her family and also said that from the colour and shape, it seemed that the snake was no ordinary snake but a divine one and worth worshipping. From that onwards, the old lady started taking a bowl of milk in the mornings and evenings and placing it near the hole in the tree.

The *Naga* would appear, drink milk and go back into the hole. This went on for some time. One day the *Naga* told her in a dream that he liked the place and people and wanted to live there. It also asked them to cut the old Deodar tree and build a temple on the spot for his residence. The old lady narrated the dream to her seven sons. The sons cut the tree and built a temple there. After that on one auspicious day a grand *hawan* was organized and the *Naga Devta* was installed in that temple. The *Naga Devta* installed in the temple was no other than the *Basak Naga*.



Other myths about Vasak Naga popular in Bhadarwah speak of Vasak Naga approaching lord Shiva for protection from Garuda. Lord Siva allows him to take abode in Lake Kaplash. While yet another myth is about the sacrifice of *Jimvutvahana*, whose statue stands besides Vasak Naga in the Nagar Temple, Bhadarwah.

## 6. Naga Cult in Jammu Region

Though Naga worship is now almost extinct in Kashmir, its prevalence can still be observed in many parts of Jammu. The hoary tradition of Naga worship being integral to the religio-cultural aspect of Western Himalayan region is widely prevalent in Jammu region in form of innumerable folk traditions and cults. The wooden temples dedicated to numerous Naga deities, identified with local names are spread in hilly and highland areas of Jammu region.

The serpent lore having undergone transformations and adaptations in course of time, have imbibed *Puranic* legends which are woven around the local Naga deities. The cult of *Gugga Jahirpir* may be the latest among them<sup>9</sup>.

The Naga Cult in Jammu as is case in the Western Himalayas, which also includes those of their female counterparts, the *Naginis*, may be grouped into five categories according to their distinct cultic characteristics. These are (I) masters of the underworld, (II) the deadly and violent reptile, (III) the lord of weather, rain and clouds, (IV) the ancestor in disguise, and (V) the anthropomorphized hero.

(I) *The masters of the underworld*: The water springs and lakes are believed to be abode of *Nagas*. The numerous sub-terrainian water-sources in Jammu region such as *baolis*, lakes, by tradition are found closely associated



with different Naga deities. The wooden temples built in the vicinity or sometimes away from these water sources, are some of the representative examples of a native architecture. Being the master of underworld, *Nagas* reign over all underwater sources of water that sustains life on the earth as the *Naga Devta* is propitiated and worshipped to invoke his blessings for fertility, plenitude and prosperity. The *doalas* (mediums), in their proclamations which they make in trance, under the afflatus of deity, foretell about portents and events during the year, particularly about crops, cattle and other worldly matters. The *doalas* also interpret the omens and prescribe measures to ensure the protection of the devtas.<sup>10</sup>

(II) *The deadly and violent reptile*: The cultic manifestation of *Naga Devta* as the deadly and violent reptile is the most feared. The *Naga devtas* are associated with certain mystico-magical propensities, and are believed to have control over the venomous reptiles. The number of temples, tharas, dedicated to them in the interiors of Jammu region is very large.

(III) *The lord of weather, rain and clouds*: In this manifestation as the lord of weather, rain and clouds, the *Naga devtas* and *Naginis* are associated with lightening. The *Basak Naga devta*, at Gandh Top, Ramanagar, is considered very powerful rain-granting god.

(IV) *The ancestor in disguise*: At some places in the hills of this region, it is believed that the deceased person also appears in guise of a serpent. In that case, it is expected that a shrine for the ancestor-in-disguise is made. The snakes are regarded as servants of *V/Basak Naga*, the



sovereign of the underworld, and their worship is most certainly connected in minds of the people with that of the pitra, e.g., the ancestor.

- (V) The anthropomorphized hero: Believed to be introduced in the medieval period from Rajasthan to this region, the Naga *cult* associated with anthropomorphic representation is seen in areas where most of Rajput immigrants have established their settlements. In the deep interior, this cult is unknown. The most popular cult of this group is that of *Gugga Jahirpir*, which is widely spread in lower Shivaliks of Jammu. The Naga cults of group (iv) and (v) do not have wooden temples.

There is also an interesting aspect of migration of Naga devtas from one place to another. Another feature of Naga devta temples is that they are located away from the villages, in the clumps of deodar and other trees. These trees, called Bani, are considered property of Naga devta and are never cut. The tree closed to the temple are considered as wish-granting and red threads or such like objects are tied to them as token of gratitude by people. In theses temples, usually anthropomorphic images in stone/wood, with entwined or braided snakes around the bodies and serpent hood canopies over the heads of the Naga deities are enshrined. Bas-relief figures of snakes on stone, iron chains, twisted iron rods to resemble snakes, tridents and few sacramental artifacts may also be kept alongside.

The temples of Naga deities are simple four-walled structures with gabled roofs. Sometimes, even a structural temple for the deity is dispensed with, and the stone image and other objects are simply placed over an elevated platform or under a deodar tree. The *Chela* or *Doala* of the *devta*



essentially belongs to the low caste. He possesses the power to communicate directly with the deity while in trance and pronounce edicts and prophecies<sup>11</sup>.

The influence of Brahmanism having made inroads into this cult is seen in the iconography of images in Naga temples such as representation of *Vishnu* on *Garuda*, *Ganesha* etc. In Naga temple, architecture especially the *garbhagrha* is fashioned like a Hindu temple with the result the door jambs depict *Navagrahas* and also *Dwarpalas*. Other than the principle shrine of a *Naga devta*, there are also cases of building of his secondary temples at other places. Many of the *Naga devtas* are said to be migrants from either Kashmir as is the case with *Vasak Naga* temples of Bhadarwah, or Himachal Pradesh, the example being the *Karlah Naga* temple, near Patnitop. Similarly in Himachal Pradesh many local *Naga Devtas*, as per folklore have migrated from contiguous areas of Jammu and Kashmir.

## 8. Myth of Devak (ancient-Devika)

*Devak* attracts thousands of pilgrims who consider the river as sacred as River Ganges. According to myths and local legends, the river is believed to have appeared on *Phaggan* (February-March) *Chaturdashi*, (4<sup>th</sup> day after the new moon of each month of the Hindu calendar) i.e., on the day *Shivaratri*, at the end of *Dwapar Yuga* when *Rishi Kashyap* prayed to god Shiva to devise some way for the purification of the people of *Madra Desh*. Lord Shiva asked his consort *Parvati* to flow through land of *Duggar* as *Devika* and declared that whosoever took a bath in this river would be purified from sins. It is said that in order to keep the company of *Parvati*, lord Shiva manifested himself as



*linga rupa* at a number of places on banks of *Devika*.

The other unique feature of *Devak* is that at some places it goes subterraneous and therefore is also called *Gupta Ganga*. Some well known pilgrimage centers along the course of *Devak* are Sudhmahadev, Chenaini, Udhampur, Jandrah, Sakon, Purmandal, Uttarbehni and Sidha Swankha near Vijaypur.

The Vedas while making mention of the sanctity of *Devak* consider it a powerful source of attaining divinity. *Devak* is considered as the elder sister of River *Ganga*. In *Padma Purana*, lord Krishna says to Yudhishtira that when River *Ganga* becomes overburdened by sins of evil-doers who take bath in her for purification, she (*Ganga*) comes to bathe in *Devak* in order to get rid of that burden.

Since God Shiva himself is manifested on the banks of *Devak* in form of *lingas*, great importance is attached to bathing in its water on festivals or on special sacred days for the purpose of obtaining spiritual cleansing.

## 9. Myth of Tawi

The River Tawi which flows by the hill, on which old Jammu city stands is known in *Puranas* as *Toushi* or *Surya Putri*. In local mythology, *Pehd Naga*, the most illustrious of 84 sons of the king of Serpents, *Basak (Vasuki) Naga*, is credited with bringing down the river to Jammu from its place of origin in the Kailash Kund in the Seoj Dahr, southwest of Bhadarwah. *Pehd Naga* brought the river to cure his father of some incurable disease with help of *Kaliveer*, popular folk deity and blessings of *Kalika Mata*. *Basak Naga* in turn handed over Jammu kingdom to *Pehd Naga*. The legend of *Baba Pehd* (in Dogri spoken as *Bava*) also has a great



historical significance as it is believed that in the hoary past the *Naga* race ruled over North India and worshipped the serpent as their tutelary deity. First mention of myth of *Baba Pehd* appears in *Rajadarshani*, the historical account of Dogra rulers written in Persian by Ganesh Das Bhadera.

A large number of Rajput clans who ruled over small principalities in the Jammu region, consider *Pehd Devta* as their *kuldevta* along with *Kaliveer*. Many communities and clans of Jammu region perform *munnan* (Mundan-head tonsuring ceremony) of their children at the *devasthan* (shrine) of *Pehd Devta*. There is also a tradition of sacrificial offering of a male goat on/after *munnan* or in case a devotee's wish is fulfilled. There are other *sthans* of *Bava Pehd* at various places in Jammu region but it is the main shrine at village Kattal Bataal near *Nagarota*, which enjoys great reverence of devotees from Jammu as well as from outside the state.

## 10. Myth of Pehd Devta

The myth of *Bava Pehd* also called as *Pehd Devta* stands transformed in the oral tradition as a legend linked to *Raja Jasdev of Jammu* who is said to have been a contemporary of *Mehmud of Gazani* in the 11<sup>th</sup> century CE. During the rule of *Raja Jasdev*, Jammu witnessed the appearance of a large number of snakes and scorpions and a variety of venomous arthropods. To rid the city of this affliction, the *Raja* performed penance for several days and nights at the end of which a visitation appeared to him in a dream in the shape of a white snake riding a fish. As it approached the *Raja* it changed into a supernatural being with fish held in each of his hands, snakes entwined around his neck and scorpions



and centipedes stuck all over his body. "I am *Pehd Devta* and I reside in the waters of river Tawi and I protect the fish of in its waters. There should be no fishing in the Tawi in future. I want you to stop fishing in the waters of Tawi".

Next morning, the Raja along with all the citizens went to the River Tawi and offered worship to *Pehd Devta* and swore not to allow fishing in its waters. A sadhu living on the bank of the river went up to Raja and said, "I am Phullo, also called Lahiri, Brahmin priest of *Pehd Dev*. The devta is the son of *Basak Naga*, son of *Sankh*, son of *Pundrik*, son of *Shesh Naga* on whom *Narain* (Narayan-God Vishnu) reposes. The sadhu further informed the Raja that *Basak Naga* has 84 sons; each one of them is deputed as protector over a country. His son *Pehd Devta* lives with his father and has dug a stream some four or five *kos* north of Jammu in a *dabar* (the deep pool within a river). We should go there and pray to him". The Raja along with people followed sadhu to the spot and invoked the god and made offerings of kneaded wheat flour. The god was pleased, all the reptiles, pests and creeping creatures stopped harassing the people and went back to their holes. The Raja donated some land to Lahiri Brahman priest. The village was named as *Pehd*. The people of Jammu especially the Jamwal Rajputs have kept up the tradition of not catching fish around the place. Till 1947, an official order prohibited the catching of fish in Jammu between Nagarota and Sheetali Water Pumping Station, Jammu.

## 11. Myths of Mansar and Surinsar lakes

The two prominent lakes in Jammu area are Mansar and Surinsar lakes. These lakes are located 16 kilometers apart



from each other. According to one of the many local legends, the Mansar lake was formed when *Arjuna* while pursuing lord of *Nagas*—the *Sheshnag* who had gone to the *pataal loka* shot an arrow at Mansar and after killing him came out by shooting another arrow from *Sruinsar*.

According to another account which again links the twin lakes to *Mahabharata* period, it is said that *Babruvahana*—the son of *Arjuna* and *Chitrangdha* and brought up by *Ulupi* (daughter of *Naga* king *Kouravya*) and second wife of *Arjuna*—was ruling this area of Shivaliks. during *Mahabharata* period. After the *Mahabharata* war, *Arjuna* performed *Ashwamedha Yajna* to prove *Pandvas*' imperial sovereignty over the land. When the sacrificial horse entered the territory of *Babruvahana* at village *Khoon* near *Ramkot* on *Dhar-Udhampur* road, he captured it. In the ensuing battle between *Babruvahana* and *Arjuna*, the latter was killed by *Babruvahana* who presented the head of *Arjuna* to his mother *Ulupi*. When she told him that he has killed his father and to make *Arjun* alive again, the *mani* from the hood of *Sheshnag* was required. In order to reach to the abode of *Shesh Naga* in *Paatal Loka*, *Babruvahana* struck an arrow at *Surinsar* and after defeating *Sheshnaga* and capturing his *mani*, came out at *Mansar*.

There is a shrine of *Shesh Nag* on the eastern side of the Mansar Lake. Here many Dogra communities, who hold the *Naga Devta* as their *kul devta*, come together for annual congregations called as *meils*. Certain communities of Hindus also perform the *munnan* (head tonsuring ceremony) of their male children here. It is considered auspicious to make the newlywed couples perform three *parikarmas* around the lake to seek the blessings of *Sheshnag*. Some Dogra Muslims families also consider the *Naga Devta* at Mansar as their guardian deity.



## 12. Myth of Vaishno Devi and Bhairon Nath

Vaishno Devi in her *kanya-roop* (in form of a celestial girl) appeared before one devout Brahmin *Sridhar* and asked him to organize *Bhandara*—a community lunch. Being poor, *Sridhar* told her that he could not afford such a feast. But the girl assured him not to worry and then disappeared. After much reflection, *Sridhar* finally invited the entire village for a feast along with *Guru Gorakh Nath* and his pupil *Bhairon Nath*.

Owing to the young girl's divine grace all guests were accommodated in *Sridhar*'s small hut and from the pot carried by her, each and every member of the gathering was served with food of his liking and choice. When it was turn of *Bhairon Nath*, he asked to be served with meat and wine. But *Vaishnavi* refused and said that she would only serve vegetarian food. *Bhairon Nath* tried to get hold of *Vaishnavi*'s hand but she managed to evade him and fled to the mountains.

*Bhairon Nath* pursued her. During her flight, the goddess stopped at *Ban Ganga*. Feeling thirsty, she shot an arrow in the hill side and made the water to gush out. She rested for a while at *Charan Paduka* where a rock bears the imprint of her holy feet.

The goddess then arrived at *Adh-kuwari* and rested in the fifteen feet long cave for nine long months like a baby rests in her mother's womb. That's why the cave is known as the *Garbha Joon* (the womb). *Bhairon* found out where *Vaishnavi* was and pursued her inside the cave<sup>12</sup>.

*Mata Vaishno Devi* blasted an opening at other end of cave with her Trident and moved deeper into mountains until she came to the cave in Trikuta Hills. Infuriated by *Bhairon*'s pursuit, *Vaishnavi* assumed the form of *Maha*



*Kali* and beheaded him outside the cave with such force that *Bhairon*'s head fell two kilometers away on a distant hilltop. Upon death, *Bhairon* realized his grave error and begged the goddess to forgive him so that the world would not remember him as the wicked one. The merciful goddess blessed *Bhairon* telling him that there shall be a temple at the place where his head fell and every devotee to Her shrine must pray first at *Bhairon*'s temple and only then his/her *yatra* would be considered as complete. It is said that the big rock at mouth of holy cave is the fossilized torso of *Bhairon Nath*. After this *Vaishnavi* went deep into the cave and assumed the form of three *pindis* (natural rocks forms) as manifestations of goddess *Kali*, goddess *Saraswati*, and goddess *Lakshmi* and immersed herself into eternal meditation.

Meanwhile *Pandit Sridhar*, depressed at disappearance of the Mata, fasted for many days. The kind-hearted goddess appeared to him in a dream and pointed towards her Shrine in the Holy Cave. After trekking through arduous mountains for days, *Pandit Sridhar* finally located the holy Cave where he started performing regular *puja*. Mata *Vaishno Devi* granted *Pandit Sridhar* a boon of four sons. Until the establishment of Shri Mata Shrine Board in 1990s, *Pandit Sridhar*'s descendants were continuing as priests of holy cave shrine of *Mata Vaishno Devi*.

### 13. Myth of Vaishno Devi and god Rama

According to this myth, the trinity of Gods, *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva*, asked the Goddess to take a human form to be born as one Ratnakar's daughter. Ratnakar's family named this young girl of extraordinary beauty and strength as *Vaishnavi*. Right from childhood, she displayed a great



thirst for knowledge. As time passed, her search led her to look into her inner self and she realized that meditation and penance alone could bring her closer to her objective of being one with God. She then gave up all material comforts and went into the forest to meditate.

Eventually, *God Rama* during his years of exile came upon *Vaishnavi's* ashram and she immediately recognized him as the incarnation of *God Vishnu*. She then asked *God Rama* to merge her into himself so that she could be one with the Supreme Creator. God Rama, in his cosmic wisdom, knowing that it was not right time, told *Vaishnavi* that he would visit her again and if she managed to recognize him, he would grant her the wish.

After winning the battle of Lanka, *God Rama* did visit *Vaishnavi* again in the guise of an old man. *Vaishnavi* failed to recognize him. When she found out the truth she was greatly upset. *God Rama* comforted her saying that he would become one with her in Kalayug<sup>13</sup> in his incarnation as *Kalki*. He told her that she in the meantime she should meditate in Trikuta Hills and attain a higher level of spirituality. After great hardship, *Vaishnavi* reached the foot of Trikuta Hills and absorbed herself in deep meditation. In time her fame spread far and wide. A large number of people came to her ashram to seek her blessings.

At this time, a *tantric* named *Gorakh Nath* had a vision of the encounter of *Vaishnavi* with *God Rama* and he became curious as to whether *Vaishnavi* had been able to attain that higher level of spirituality. He sent his faithful disciple *Bhairon Nath* to find out the truth. *Bhairon Nath* secretly began to observe *Vaishnavi* and noticed that despite being an ascetic, she always carried a bow and arrows wherever



she went and was always accompanied by *langoors* or big black monkeys and a ferocious lion. Captivated by the extraordinary beauty of *Vaishnavi*, *Bhairon Nath* became enamored of her and began pestering her to marry him. The furious *Vaishnavi* repeatedly sent him away. The part of story about the Goddess's flight up the mountains and *Bhairon's* pursuit and his subsequent death, is the same as in the first myth.

#### 14. Myth of Bahvey aali Mata

*Bahvey aali Mata*, Great Mother *Mahakali* is the guardian deity of Jammu. She is worshipped in the stone temple situated within the Bahu fort complex, Jammu, which is located on the left bank of River Tawi. The temple's origin as well as its subsequent fame as one of ancient *Shaktipeethas* in North India is explained in popular myths.

According to one such myth, the *Naga* a ruler of Jammu, *Raja Basak (Vasuki)*, asked his twenty sons ( in some versions the number of the sons is mentioned as 22) to bring the divine mother enshrined in form of rock at Bhadarwah and install her at the present location of Bahu. After great competition and getting over numerous hurdles created by his brothers, *Raja Pehd*, one of *Raja Basak's* sons, ultimately succeeded in enshrining her in the temple at Bahu.

According to another oral account, Bahu fort is associated with *Bahu Lochan*, brother of *Jambu Locahan*, the legendary king who had founded Jammu in 1600 BCE and who also set up the shrine of *Mahakali* here. But contrary to the legendary accounts, a local scripture titled *Devika Mahatamaya* states that the original temple was constructed by Raja Sangram Pal and Parshu Ram during Jahangir's period.



## 15. Myth of Shivkhori

Shiv Khori cave which attracts lakhs of devotees annually is one of the venerated cave shrines of *God Shiva* in Jammu region. It is located in Ransoo village in Reasi district of Jammu division.

According to a popular legend, a demon named *Bhasmasur*, after a long meditation of *God Shiva*, obtained a *vardaan* (boon) to end the life of any one by placing his hand on the other's head and burning him/her to ashes. After obtaining the boon, *Bhasmasur* planned to end the life of *God Shiva*. On seeing his evil designs, *God Shiva* hid in a cave which is presently known as Shiv Khori.

*God Vishnu*, seeing *God Shiva* in trouble, appeared before the demon in his *Mohini Rupa* and asked the demon to follow her dance steps. The demon started dancing, and imitating the steps of *Mohini* placed his hand on own head and thus was destroyed with his own power. As per the myth, all thirty three crores of *devi-devtas* reside in this cave in shape of *pindis* on which natural milky water drips from the ceiling of the cave.

According to a legend the historic *Shiv Khori* cave is believed to have been discovered by a Muslim shepherd who while searching his missing goats went inside the cave. However, he was startled to see a number of saints inside the cave deeply engrossed in meditation. Impressed by the divine spectacle, he also bowed in reverence. Later on, the shepherd disclosed the secret of the holy cave to other people in spite of his promise made to the saints not to tell anybody about the cave.

## 16. Myth of Sudh Mahadev

One of ancient Shiva pilgrimages in North India, Sudh



Mahadev is located in Chenaini tehsil, 50 kilometers east of Udhampur. As per a popular legend, there was a demon named *Sudheet*, who went to Goddess Parvati to pay respect. However, his demonic look frightened the Goddess who shrieked loudly. God Shiva, who was doing penance, heard the voice of Parvati and thinking that Paravati was in trouble killed the demon with his trident. When God Shiva came to know the actual sequence of events, he offered the demon his life back. But the demon refused and said that he wanted to die by the hands of God Shiva to achieve salvation. Moved by the demon's devotion, God Shiva ordered that, henceforth, *Sudheet's* name would be taken before His own. That is how the place where Goddess Parvati used to worship the *Shiva linga* came to be known as Sudh Mahadev.

### 17. Myth of Airwan

Situated on right bank of river Ravi, near Kathua, Airwan, is one of the ancient historic settlements in Jammu region. Its great antiquity is reflected by the surface finds of Kushana period structures. The origin of Airwan is explained through many mythological and legendary accounts.

As per a popular myth the village *Airwan* got its name from *Airawat*, God *Indra's* famous white elephant who was reborn here. The myth says that while River *Ganga* was being brought from the heaven to the earth, its flow was obstructed by a big stony mountain. Every effort was made to remove that obstruction but in vein. It was then realized that the obstruction could be removed only by God *Indra's* elephant *Airawat*.

Accordingly, God *Indra* was prayed to. He sent his elephant to do this job for the welfare of humanity. *Airawat*



removed that obstacle. After accomplishing the job, *Airawat* became proud of his might and said that the flow of the *Ganga* had been made possible through his prowess only. In order to humble the pride of *Airawat*, Goddess *Ganga* decided to teach him a lesson. She increased her flow and washed away the elephant to *Pataal Lok* –the netherworld. The stream which carried the elephant to *Pataal Lok* was named as *Pataal Ganga* or *Gupt Ganga*.

After learning about the fate of *Airawat*, God *Indra* was greatly disturbed and reached the earth along with other *devtas* to get back his beloved elephant. He was advised by *Narada Muni* to meditate upon God *Shiva* as he only could get his elephant back. Acting on *Narada Muni*'s advice, God *Indra* meditated upon God *Shiva*. After being pleased by *Indra*'s devotion, God *Shiva* appeared and restored his elephant back from *Gupt Ganga*. The site wherefrom the elephant had come out is associated with the present day location of natural spring in *Airwan*.

According to another legend the temple of God *Shiva* at *Airwan* was built by King *Vikramaditya*. Another popular myth links *Airwan* to Ramayana period: In the *Suryavanshi Ikshvaku* dynasty of Ayodhya Kings, *Raja Sudarshan* had two sons. While *Raja Sudarshan* continued to rule Ayodhya, his one son *Agnigir* headed for Shivaliks and travelling through Kangra (ancient *Nagaarkot*) arrived at Kathua. There he established his kingdom with his capital at *Bhupa*. He also laid down the foundations of two more towns *Iravti* and *Pushapavati*. *Agnigir*'s son *Vayusharabha/Vayubabran*, married *Airan Devi*, the daughter of Kathua ruler, on whose name the town of *Airan-vati* was named. This town is the present day *Airwan*.



## 18. Myth of Babbor

The archeological and historical importance of Babbor, the erstwhile ancient princely state of Jammu, has been amply established by a number of references to it in Kalhana's chronicle *Rajatarangini*. Further the presence of 10<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> century medieval stone temples, one of which had revealed an earlier brick foundation going back to Kushana times also points towards its historic antecedents.

As per the oral traditions popular in the area, Babbor's past is connected to Mahabharata times through a myth that links the site as capital of *Arjuna's* son *Babruvahan* while the name of his mother *Ulapi* is associated with Mansar lake, an ancient water body of Jammu region, wherefrom she is said to come out of *Pataal Lok*.

According to the myth when *Arjuna* was moving with *Ashvaamedha* horse, *Babruvahan*—born to *Chitrangana*, captured the sacrificial horse and annihilated the *Pandava* army at a place called *Khoon* on *Dhar Road*. When the *Naga* princess *Ulapi* came to know about the deed of her step son, she told *Babruvahan* the truth about *Arjuna* being his father<sup>14</sup>. Thereafter *Babruvahan* raised all the dead with divine powers.



# Customs, Rites, Rituals and Ceremonies

## 1. Introduction

Customs, rituals and ceremonies are universal features of human existence. An inevitable component of all cultures, these deeply meaningful and yet subtle practices play a pivotal role in forming social identities and normative behavior.

The term *custom* is used to refer to the whole body of those shared behavior patterns in a particular group or society which are regarded as the traditional and established ways of the people. Customs are more than mere aggregate of individual habits supported by social approval. In other words, customs are the actual long-term social behavior accepted and approved by most members of a group. Customs mostly take on the force of moralizing on statute laws and they influence the way people dress, eat and behave.

However the term *rite* is used for a ceremony generally associated with the passage from one important stage to another in someone's life, for instance birth, initiation, marriage and death. Rite is a single formal religious act and 'rites' are multiple acts.

*Ritual* is a solemn symbolic activity comprising a series of *rites* involving gestures, words and objects, performed according to a prescribed sequence in a sequestered place. In this way *ritual* is performance of a rite or rites as per preset rules and regulations. *Ritual* is performed to produce an effect of its own and its purpose differs according to the society and the religious beliefs. It usually involves only those who are performing a role in the ritual and may be



performed by a very small group or an individual.

*Ceremony*, in contrast, is performed on a special occasion and plays no role in creating or changing a condition, but celebrates a pre-determined or pre-existing condition or event. Considered functionally necessary, ceremonies may be featured by celebrations and performances like dance and music. A ceremony may have any number of people who attend but do not participate directly; they may be guests, witnesses or are simply there to partake of the associative festivities.

## 2. Ritual and Ceremonies of Jammu

The ritual culture of Jammu region is formed of many lingering pre-historic beliefs associated with shamanism and animism and traces of pre-Vedic cultic practices different races and groups of the hoary past such as *Pishaca*, *Naga*, *Kinnara*, and *Gandharva* who inhabited the region along with races from the early historic periods like *Adumbra*, *Madra*, *Vahlika*, *Darva*, *Abhisara* and *Yavana*.

The religio-social philosophies of Vedic *Grah-Sutras* and *Kalpa-Sutras*, the tenets of *Vaishnavism*, *Shaivism* and *Shaktism*, *Buddhism*, *Jainism* along with *Islam*, *Sikhism* and *Christianity*, in course of time stand inextricably entwined in the life styles of the people as religio-cultural traditions and customs. Thus the local ethnic groups of Jammu - Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Christians - constitute the multicultural mosaic of the region and the state. They exhibit unique features and reveal many common practices as shared cultural inheritance.



### 3. Sanskars of Jammu Hindus

The word *Sanskara* is Dogri adaptation of Sanskrit word *Samskara*. Called in English as rites of passage, these are Hindu ritual events or a series of sacraments, sacrifices, which mark a person's transition from one stage of social life to another and pave the way for one's physical and spiritual journey through this life.

Since Vedic times, various Hindu *sanskaras* are believed to purify one's sins and even correct physical deformities. Varying from 16 to 24, the *sanskars* are prescribed in ancient texts for major stages of life such as pregnancy, childbirth, education, puberty, marriage, and death. Barring a few local variations, Dogra Hindus observe all above mentioned *sanskara*.

According to ancient texts, the pre-natal rites are *Garbadharana* (the act of conception), *Pumsvana* (consecration of child in the womb) and *Simanatonasya* (parting of hairs of pregnant woman). The childbirth *sanskaras* are *Jaatkarma* (severing of the navel cord), *Namkarna* (naming ceremony), *Nishkramna* (taking the child for the first time outside the house), *Annaprashana* (child's first feeding of solid food), *Chudakarna* (shaving of head), *Karanabhedana* (piercing the ears). The ones related to education are *Vidyarambha* (teaching of alphabets), *Upnayana* (wearing of the sacred thread), *Parisharta* (*Vedarambha*-the learning of Vedas and Upanishads), *Keshanta* (first shave), *Ritusuddhi* (first menstruation) and *Samavartana* (end of student hood). *Biya* or Marriage and *Anteyshati* or death is also part of the *solas-sanskars* (sixteen *samskaras*). The word *sanskara* also signifies cultural and moral heritage and upbringing in modern Hindi language.



In this light the rituals followed by Jammu Hindus—Dogras, Paharis, Bhadarwahis, Kishtawaris, Padaris and others—mostly follow Brahmanical rituals for birth, death and marriage. But at the same time these communities and groups also practice a number of rites and customs, associated with folk religion dominated by world of autochthonous deities. Dogra Hindus like the Hindus in the rest of the country also observe these rites as per the tenets of *Snatan Dharma*<sup>15</sup> with local names and practices. However with the passage of time and due to local changes, not only the number of rites have been reduced, but these are observed as expressions of traditional as well as essential practices only.

#### 4. Pre-Natal Sanskar

**Ritaan:** This is a ritual to bless the expectant mother and child in her womb. Observed by the husband's family, it is also held to safe-guard the daughter-in-law and the fetus from evil eyes or other mishaps. In Jammu the rite of *Ritaan*, which seems to combine rites of *Pumsvna* and *Simantonnayana*, is performed either in the seventh or eighth months of pregnancy. In some communities and sub-castes it is observed during the seventh month of the pregnancy and called as *Satwaan*. If held in the eighth month of the pregnancy then it is called as *Tthoan*.

On the day of the rite, gods are worshipped along with the family deity. *Daana* (alms) and other offerings are given according to status and financial standing of the family. Assisted by the '*nain*'—family barber's wife, or sister-in-law or other females of the same *kula*<sup>16</sup>, the pregnant woman takes bath. She is dressed up in new clothes sent by her parents and mostly of yellow, pink, or red color. She is also decked



up with ornaments and made to sit on a *Peera*—low based wooden seat/stool. The *nain* combs her hair, sometimes into *meendies* (miniature braids).

The women folk then sing auspicious songs like *Bihayiaan*<sup>17</sup> to welcome and wish long life to the yet to be born member of the family. Women folk put *sagan*<sup>18</sup> of a coconut, almonds and some cash in expectant mother's lap. Sweets or meals are served to the gathering of *suhaagans* (married ladies whose husbands are alive) of the family and neighborhood. A general atmosphere of worship, satisfaction and happiness marks the occasion. In Mirpuris and other Hindus from areas presently under Pakistan's occupation, this ritual is observed in seventh month and is called *Suchcha*. *Leenda*: With the beginning of the ninth month of pregnancy, parents of the expectant daughter send to her in-law's house *Leenda*, which consists of *sund*, (a stir fried sweet of ginger powder mixed with dry fruits like almond dates, cashews, resins, shredded coconut, melon seeds), fried snacks such as *papads*, *pakorras*, unsalted *matthis*, sweets, fruits, clothes and ornaments. The quality and quantity of the gifts varies according to the financial standing of the family.

## 5. Birth and Childhood

Dogras are a patrilineal society. The birth of a son is considered essential to perpetuate the family: According to Hindu religion only the male issue is competent to perform funeral rites without which any ordinary soul cannot get redemption. The Sanskrit word *putra* also means 'he who delivers one from hell'. So the birth of a son in Jammu region, like elsewhere in the country continues to be an occasion of festivity and celebrations. Most of the post-natal *snaskars* in



Jammu region therefore relate to a male child.

In case of a female child no such enthusiasm is to be seen. Among Dogra Rajputs female infanticide was practiced as recently as the early 20th century as the birth of daughter was considered to be a source of future humiliation since she had to remain subservient to family of groom. Many a time when a family which had exercised such an infanticide, suffered sudden losses or was afflicted with diseases, then the causes of misfortune and losses were attributed to the wrath of the spirit of such as infant, labeled as *Sati*. In such cases, to appease the spirit of the deceased infant, a memorial was built in form of a small temple like structure called *Dehri* in which the deceased was enshrined as a *mohra* (sculptural relief showing a standing female). In due course of time *Satis* were deified and treated as family deities and worshipped annually and on special family ceremonies and functions. A large number of such *dehri*s can still be seen all over Duggar. The only exception to this preference for the male child is found in some communities in remote areas like *Lohai-Malhar* (District Kathua), where the birth of a girl child is considered an asset as she cooks, cleans, works on the farms etc. When a boy wants to marry the girl, he is taking away an asset of the family and therefore must pay the 'bride price'.

## 6. Jaat Karam

This ritual relating to the cutting of the 'naadu'-umbilical cord is called 'Jaat Karm'. In olden times it was held immediately after the birth of the child that is between 12 to 16 *gharis* (the old unit of time, consisting of roughly 45 minutes). But the ritual stands discontinued in modern times due to the fact that deliveries are mostly conducted under



modern medical supervision.

After hearing the news of birth of a male child, the father of the child worships *kul devta*, gives alms and then pays respect to the elders of the family. The kith and kin are invited and treated with respect and honour. After *puja* of god Ganesh, the newly born is made to taste honey, ghee and gold—all the three are considered as *amrit*- ambrosia. The sacrament of *Jaar Karam* is linked to purifying certain *doshas* associated with the life-giving feed that the child gets in mother's womb. A *bihaayi*--earthen lamp is lit by the side of the bed of mother and child. This is continually lit for days, till the ceremony of *Punj-abe Nauhn*.

## 7. Punj-abe Nouhn

After the fifth day of the child's birth, *Punj-abe* (also called at some place *Panj-Trode*) is held. This is basically a cleansing ritual. The bedding is changed and the mother and child are given an herbal bath which is called *Panj Troda Nouhn*. In this special bath, the water is boiled with a mixture of Fenugreek seeds and leaves of *Banna*, *Pnakanda* trees. The *manji*--cot of mother and child is also moved from its position to another or washed. From the day of the delivery till 21 to 40 days, the new mother is only given medicated water called as *khraani* which is a mixture of herbs.

In some communities, *kanjaks* (young girls) from the neighborhood are invited to tie a *kaccha* thread around the hand of the newly born child. Relatives and near and dear ones come to congratulate the family, the women folk sing songs called *Bihayiaan*: "*Jis tihare mera Hari-har jammaiya, Soie tihara bhagain bharyaa, nahtaa dohtaa, patt paleteya, kucchar mileyaa, maamein gi*" - /The day my Hari-har was



born, that day is auspicious, bathed and wrapped up, he rests smugly in mama's-(maternal uncle's) bosom/. *Gur* (jaggery) is also offered to *devatas* and given to *purohits* (priests).

## 8. Sutra

This ritual is related to purity and purification by removing the *sutak dosh* (birth impurities). It is, as per the *mahurat* (auspicious date and time), which is generally held on thirteenth, sixteenth, twenty-first day after the birth of a male child. In case it cannot be held on any of these dates then it is performed after consulting *purohit* at a proper *mahurat*.

The mother and child are dressed up in new clothes after the bath. The hairs of mother are plaited by a *nain* or sister-in-law and red ribbon tied in her braid. After the worships of gods and *kul devta*, the child is named as per the instructions of the *purohit /pundit*. A cotton thread sent by the maternal side is tied around the neck of the child and his mother by *kanjaks*, or her sister-in-law. Sweets and traditional *pakwaans* (oil fried fermented and sweet breads), ornaments, clothes, utensils, bedding, *pangoora* (baby cradle) and other gifts are also sent along with the thread.

In some communities, it is followed by *puja* of the *Jor* (a couple), or *Tahie Jor* (Two and a half couple—a Brahmin couple and son) who are also served food. The *suhagans* are also worshiped and *nai* plays traditional *kail*-a long trumpet like musical instrument, and women sing folk songs on the occasion such as *bal-lila* (childhood tales) of Lord Krishna or Lord Rama. The ceremony concludes with Brahmins, relatives and neighbors etc. being treated to a community feast.



## 9. Pre-Munnan Sanskaras

The *sanskar* of taking the child for the first time out of the house is generally held after the 40<sup>th</sup> day of the child's birth. As per *mahurat*, the child is made to look at the sun and the family deity. During the same night the child is also made to see the moon. One can also take the child first time out of home after the *Sutra* ceremony. This ritual is also celebrated by paintings of the sun, moon and stars on the inner or outer walls or the prayer room of the house.

The first time when the newly born is made to sit or touch the ground is also an important occasion. After the fifth month of child's birth, he/she is made to taste *anna*— cereals for the first time. In some families, objects symbolizing different occupations such as knowledge, arts, religious scriptures, arms and weapons, business and farming are also placed in front of the child. It is believed that whatsoever object the child touches indicates his future line of livelihood.

Till the 40<sup>th</sup> day of the child's birth, certain prohibitions are observed by its parents and immediate family members. These include not visiting any household where a death, marriage or birth of a child has taken place. Similarly the family members of such households do not visit the house where a child is born.

*Cchatti Sanskar*: In some families, till the sixth month from the birth of the child, the mother and child wear only unstitched white clothes and do not apply *mehandi* (henna), *surma*(kohl), *bindi* (bright dot of red colour applied on forehead). Then in a ceremony almost similar to the *sutra*, the mother and child are made to wear colored clothes.



## 10. Munnan

Considered an important *sanskar*, the *munnan* (*mundan* in Hindi) or the head tonsuring ceremony is performed between the first and third year of child's birth. On the day of *munnan*, the family members and close relatives participate in a *havan*, *puja* of the gods and family deities. Amidst chanting of prayers, the child's head is shaven to remove the hairs which are kept uncut since his birth. After shaving the head, the child is dressed up in yellow or pink colored dress. He makes 'friendship' with children of the same age. Songs, playing of musical instrument such as *kail*, and a brass band on the occasion is followed by a community feast. The *munnan* ceremony thus consists of a *puja* by pandit, cutting of hair by barber and friendship of the child with children of same age.

*Munnan* in Dogras is like a mini-marriage: a festive occasion held with great pomp and show. On this day, the barber shaves off the hair and leaves a circle of hair in the centre of head as a sign of a *bodi* (*shikha* in Hindi)<sup>19</sup>. Some families, as per the vow, hold *munnan* ceremony at the *sthan* (shrine) of *kul devta* or *dehri* of *kul devi*.

## 11. Karan Bhedan, Upnayana, Yagnopiveet

The *Karan Bhedan* ritual, which is not practiced in modern times, comprises the piercing of the child's ears at the age of five. This ceremony had its origin in pan-Indian ancient *Ayurveda* system of medicine wherein piercing of ears was considered as deterrent for all kind of diseases related to hernia. *Karan Bhedan*, which was discontinued in the mid of last century has again come into fashion especially amongst the youth who are getting their bodies pierced along



with ears to support an ornament like a *bali*- gold ring or a *koka*- ear piece.

**Upnayana & Yagnopiveet:** The *Upnayana sanskar* celebrating the *Vidyarambha*— beginning of education and *brahmacharya* life, which in olden days meant taking or leading the child to a Guru—has undergone quite a change. Dogra Hindus in modern times though still conscious of the sacred character of this important event in life of the child, celebrate it by worshipping the deities at home and making of some sweet like *halwa* etc. Parents also distribute toffees and sweets to all students of class or school to which their ward enrolls for the first time. There is a growing trend to hold this rite along with the *munnan* ceremony.

**Yagnopaveet:** In olden times when children were sent to *Gurukuls* for study, wearing of *jagnopiveet* or sacred thread was considered as an initiation ritual to symbolize the transference of spiritual knowledge.

Today this practice has been reduced to a ritual ceremony which can be performed at any stage before the marriage of the male child. Wearing a *dhoti*, the child/youth after a *puja* conducted by priest-the Guru, carries a *jholi* and goes through the motions of asking *bhiksha* from the family members and relative present on the occasion and offers the collected alms to the guru as his *guru dakhshina*. The guru then gives the *guru mantra*.

## 12. Viaha--Marriage

This ceremony which marks the beginning of the household life is one of the important and most elaborate



of all the *sanskars*. Called *Viaha* in Dogri, it symbolizes not just the sacred union of two individuals, but of the coming together of two families and extended families as well. The families usually decide about the would-be-bride/groom. Families search for eligible partners for their children through word of mouth or family priests. Arranged marriages in Jammu are strictly intra-religious and intra-caste. Many times the help of a middle man, called as *rwaraa*, is taken to find suitable match. The *rwaraa* can be a close relative or an elder of noble nature. The marriage bureaus are present day avatars of the *rwaara* institution. After initial zeroing in on the prospective bride or groom, the compatibility of the couple is then assessed on the basis of matching of horoscopes, and after they match, that is after *guna milaan*, only then an alliance is sought for. In fact, till the recent past the bride and the groom used to see each other for the first time only on their wedding day.

### 13. **Thaaka**

After matching of horoscopes the alliance is agreed upon by both the parties. Elders of the would-be-bride's family visit the groom's house to formally confirm the *rishta*--alliance. Hence forth all efforts to search for a suitable match come to an end. At this occasion, the *Tilak* ceremony is held in presence of elders of both the families and selective relatives. Some token gifts are also given by the bride's family to the groom and his family members.

***Kurmayee or Sagan:*** *Thaaka* is followed by *Kurmayee* or *sagan* (engagement ceremony). Based on readings of the horoscopes, a *muhurat* for the engagement and wedding is



decided. The *Kurmayee* is traditionally held at the groom's place or at a temple (now a days in hotels and restaurants also) where bride's brothers and cousins led by a senior relative apply *tilak* on the forehead of would be groom. The gifts are presented. Traditionally the gifts include upto five *thaals* (brass platters) and baskets of mixed dried fruits and nuts, sweetmeats and fresh fruits. The gifts nowadays may include electronic gadgets and other items like cars and two wheelers.

**Chunni Ceremony:** This ceremony is held by groom's family. Groom's sisters and/or *bhabhis* (brothers' wives) go to bride's house to present her a dress and a red *chunni* (head scarf). The bride then formally presents herself before the guests who then cover her head with the red *chunni* as a mark of accepting her as part of their family. *Kurmayee* then can precede the marriage ceremony by any length of time: from one year to a few days before the marriage.

#### 14. Tith- Date of Marriage & Geet

After the *kurmayee* ceremony, both families get busy in deciding the *tith* (date of marriage). The period of '*tara doobna* when the stars Venus or Jupiter are *ast* (combust), is considered inauspicious *mahurat* for the marriage. After a date free from '*tara doobna dosh*', is arrived at, the astrologer\ priest announces the *mahurat*. The communication of the wedding *mahurat* to the groom's family is also considered as an important occasion called *lagg layie jana*. Once the date is mutually agreed upon, both families start preparations for the marriage.



*Geet*: Many days before the marriage date, the bridegroom's house turns into a festive space. In olden times close relatives especially *massis*, *taayis* and *buaas* (aunts), treading long distance on foot would arrive a week or more before the marriage and render help in the marriage preparations.

According to one's convenience, one month or fifteen days before the marriage date, a formal invite is sent to the ladies of the clan and neighborhood to gather after dinner to sing wedding songs. Each participant/guest is sent off with a gift of sweets, *patashas*, *ladoos*, *shakarparas* at end of late night dance-music sessions, which go on till the day of marriage. These music sessions have undergone a change in recent times. After starting with folk marriage songs, ladies also sing film or other popular songs to the rhythm of a *dholak*.

## 15. Khulley Sagan

The day of *Khulle Sagan* marks the formal beginning of rituals and rites of marriage in bride's as well as groom's houses. Groom's mother and in her absence any other elder lady of the *kula* (clan), designated to sit in all auspicious rituals related to marriage, dresses up in fine clothes and ornaments including 'natth' (a large nose ring), her head covered with a pink *dupatta*, sits in the *puja*. She also gifts a pink *dupatta* to all married ladies of the *kula*. After *puja*, *Urd dal* (black lentil) and wheat mixed in small portions is soaked in water. Three small *chullahas* (cooking stoves) are also fashioned out of a mixture of good earth and husk. The designated female, ties a *moli* (auspicious red thread) on the right wrist of the would-be-groom or bride. The ladies sing folk songs *ghodiaan* in case of the groom and *suhaag* in case of bride. They are also given *patasey* or sugar as a gift. It is



called *gana bannana*. Same is done for the bride also. At this time the *navgraha puja* (invocation of nine planets) is held. Once *gaana* is tied, the bride and groom are not allowed to move out of their respective houses for the fear of malefic effects of black magic and evil eye.

## 16. Ganddian

After *khulle sagan*, normally on the third, fifth, seventh, ninth or eleventh day or according to the mahurat, the *ganddi* ceremony is held. In the groom's house, under the direction of a priest, '*kumbha*' (pot full of water) and *dreyaas*<sup>20</sup> is put at the place of *puja* and is not disturbed till the arrival of the bride.

The groom's family sends a gift of almonds, *sougi* (dry grapes), and *chhuaare* (dry dates). This gift normally weighs *sava ser*- one and one fourth of *ser*, (*ser*-the old measure of weight equivalent to approximately 800 grams); as the number one and one fourth is considered as an auspicious. This gift called as *ganddi*, along with some cash is sent in a small red cotton/silk *gutthi* (small bag) which is tied up with a '*moli*'. Normally a *purohit/Brahmin* used to carry the gift to the bride's house. In bride's home, it is only after receiving the '*ganddi*', the '*kumbha*' and '*dreyaas*' are put at the place of *puja*. A *ganna* is also tied to the right hand of the bride and the groom on this day. *Gaana* is moli thread to which a *kori--cowrie* (Cowry-small sea shell), coin, iron ring and yellow mustard seeds are tied up.

## 17. Saant

It means '*grha shanti*' (appeasement of planets) ceremony is held a day before or on the same day of marriage. In bride's



house it begins in the early morning with five females of the family mixing and pounding *Urd dal* and wheat which are soaked overnight, to a paste. Then *badahiyaan*<sup>21</sup> are prepared from the paste and fried in a *karai* (skittle), on fire lit in *chuhlas* which are made on the day of *khulle sagan*. *Babroos*<sup>22</sup> are also cooked. This ritual is called as *karai jajjani*.

This is followed by *puja* of lord *Ganapati*, *navgrhas*, and *kul devta*. In this ritual the maternal uncle sits in the *puja* and also bears the entire expense of the ceremony. The gifts by the maternal side on this occasion which also include cash, is a customary way of giving financial help to the bride's family. Many a time, if the need be, the maternal side bears the major expense of the marriage. (*Mamein Da Junn*—feast for the *Barat*)

One important stage of *saant* ceremony is applying the *butna* (a mixture of *Urd dal* paste, wheat flour, *haldi* (turmeric) and mustard oil on the bridegroom's body by his *bhabhis* and other married ladies of the family called as *suhaagwantis*. In the bride's house a similar ritual of *saant* is also held. The Widows don't participate in this ceremony. Afterwards the bride/groom takes the bath and sits on *peerah*, then *mama* does *barae bharna* ceremony. Here the *mama* in an act of purification sprinkles water with mango leaves seven times on the head of bride/groom who sits under the canopy of a black blanket. Then the groom and the bride are lifted by respective *mamas* and made to sit in front of *dreyaas* and *kumbha* for *puja*.

## 18. Chooda

After the above ceremony, the *chooda* ceremony is held. In



this the *mama* and *maami* do the *chooda daan*. Traditionally, a set of 21 bangles in red/maroon and white/ivory is selected for this ceremony by the bride's *mama* and *maami* who gift the *chooda* to the bride during the ceremony. A *puja* or *havan* is usually organized during the *chooda* ceremony. The bangles are first purified with milk and rose petals. Before it is put on the bride's wrist by her maternal uncle, all the close relatives touch the *chooda* as a mark of their blessings.

After wearing *chooda*, bride's wrist is covered with a white cloth, as she is not to see the *chooda* till the time of the wedding ceremonies. *Chooda* is one of the most evident marks of a newlywed bride. It is considered to bring good luck for the newlyweds. Fertility and prosperity are two words that can be easily associated with the *chooda*, which is worn for a minimum period of 40-45 days after the wedding day. *Natth* (ceremonial big nose ring) is also worn by the bride. The bride also applies on her hands *mehandi* sent by her in-laws.

## 19. Kalirey

After the above ceremony a *haven* is held, and the bride is made to stand up and *puranahuti* is offered. The bride sits with her friends and then *kalirey* are tied up with the *chooda*. These long umbrella-shaped hangings are a unique combination with the *chooda*, which signifies happiness for the newlyweds and eternal love between the couple. Earlier, people used to cut coconuts in half and used thread to tie them face down. Four straight chains were attached or tied with these to make a *kalira*. In Jammu region '*kouris*'-small sea shells, were also tied to the *kalirey*. People gifted this home-made accessory to their daughters to wish them a



happy married life.

Nowadays *kalirey* made of silver/gold are in vogue. The bride's sisters, friends and other relatives tie the *kalirey* to her *chooda*. The significance is to provide good wishes to the bride and to remind her of her cousins and friends whom she is going to leave behind when she gets married. Also, the coconut-shape of the *kalirey* is symbolic that she never runs out of food in the new home. The ritual is followed with the bride shaking her *chooda* and *kalirey* bearing hands on the heads of all the unmarried girls present. It is believed that if any part or leaf of the *kalirey* falls on the head of any girl, she will be the next one to get married. The *kalirey* are kept by the bride as a memory of her parent's home and a memento of the wedding day.

## 20. Seharbandi

A *sehra* is a headdress made of strings of beads/flowers and tied around the groom's head by his maternal uncle on the wedding day (the groom is supposed to unveil his face only at the proper time). This ceremony is called *sehrabandi*. All those assembled on the occasion such as relatives, neighbors give monetary gifts called as *tamol*, to the boy as a token of good luck. Nowadays the groom is garlanded with currency notes also. Often the mother of the groom keeps *Sehra* to remember the occasion. A few decades back, it was a custom that community members would visit the groom's house at the time of *sehrabandi* to wish and bless the groom and family. They were given return gifts of sweets like five *ladoos*. Just like the bride's *chooda*, the *sehra* is an important part of the groom's attire on his wedding day. The women folk who stayed back after the departure of the



*barat*, indulge in absence of male members, in an all night dance and song ceremony called *jagarna*.

## 21. Baraat

After *sehrabandi*, the bride groom sits on a mare. His sisters feed channa dal (split black grams) to the mare while *bhabhis* put *surma* in the eyes of groom and sing songs called as *ghodiaan*. It is a practice that *ccharpala* (male kid of the family) also sits with the groom on the mare. The *baraat* departs with an orchestra of local musical instruments or a band playing popular numbers.

In Duggar, the marriage party used to be an all male affair and no female accompanied the *baraat*. But in modern time ladies and young girls also accompany the *baraat*. It is also customary for the *baraat* before proceeding to bride's place to go to a temple or other sacred place to seek divine blessings. The men accompanying the groom in many parts of Duggar, especially hilly areas use this occasion to drink and dance. In cities there is a growing trend amongst the elite to serve hard drinks to *baraatis* at reception.

After the *baraat* reaches the bride's place, the ceremony of *milni* that is a formal meeting of elders of two families is held. This usually begins with the fathers of both bride and groom, followed by the respective maternal uncles hugging and garlanding each other. Bride's father and uncles also give gifts such as gold rings/chains/ balnkets. *Milni* symbolizes the unification of the two clans. Then the elders and other members of the bride's family welcome the groom and the marriage party. The mother of the bride performs *aarti* of the groom when he enters the house. Then the bride and groom exchange *jaimala/varamala*, which is a decorated garland.



While the members of the *baraat* get busy in enjoying the marriage feast, the groom and his friends are made to sit in a neighbor's house, called as *luaa alaa ghar*. There the groom is visited by *saalis* (the sisters and cousins of the bride), who serve Dogri dish *keuer*, curd and sugar to the groom and his friends. There is also exchange of light hearted jokes on the occasion. Another popular custom is of hiding the shoes of the groom. The bride's sisters hide the groom's shoes and demand their gifts called *kalichariaan* (finger rings of gold or silver) and money before returning the shoes.

## 22. Lagan Beidaan

Solemnizing the Marriage: The marriage ceremony as per the *mahurat* starts on the same night, after the *baraatis* have taken their meals and retired to the designated place for rest. The first *beid* in Dogras is held inside a room and is called as *andralli beid*. It starts with the *puja* of the groom, who arrives first. He is welcomed by girl's father in the prescribed form. The Groom is given four sets of clothes and served with *madhupark*: a mixture of milk, curd, honey, and butter. Then the bride appears in her marriage dress, mostly in red bedecked with jeweler from head to toe. She is seated besides the groom. This is followed by *joul-bannana* (tying one end of a red cloth to the hems of bride's dress while the other end is wrapped around the groom's shoulders). This is called as *ganddh chitrava* in Dogri. The important part of the *andarli beid* is the *kanyadaan* or giving away of the bride. *Kanyadaan* is derived from the Sanskrit words *kanya* which means virgin girl and *daan* which means giving away. This is performed by the father of the bride, who after a *sankalpa* (solemn vow), gives his daughter to the groom,



requesting him to accept her as an equal partner. This ritual involves *puja* of Lord Ganesha and other devtas followed by *gotrochaar*. Here the *gotra* of groom is recited and then that of bride's. This symbolizes the formal admission of the bride in the groom's *gotra*.

After the *kanyadaan*, the groom gives ornaments brought along by him to the bride. This in Dogri is called as *barasui*. (*vari or vara sui*) This occasion of the opening of the *barasui*-which also includes a *suhaag puda* is eagerly awaited by the ladies and young girls as *barasui* reflects the financial status of the groom's family. Amidst the blowing of *sankha* (conch shell), the bride is decked up with ornaments from the *barasui*. Thereafter groom and the bride come out to the *bahrli beid*- which is outside. Also called as *mandapa*, it is an awning consisting of four posts driven into the ground with a red cloth spread over them. Banana plants were put up as pillars and a top covering was made of twigs and mango foliage.

It is here that the bride and the groom after a *havan*, circle the sacred fire seven times, in a clockwise direction, called *lavaan phere*. In first three *lavaans*, the bride is in the lead, while in the fourth one, the groom comes forward. Then both of them sit down, with the bride sitting on the left of the groom, her rightful place as *vamangi*-the better left half. Before this there is an important ritual of *saptpadi*, the seven vows, which the bride and the groom promise to each other a happy and prosperous life.

The wedding culminates with the groom applying *sindoor* (vermillion) on to the bride's forehead, and welcoming her as his partner for life. This is the first time that *sindoor* is applied to the forehead of the woman, when the bridegroom



himself adorns her with it.

Till few decades back the dowry given by bride's father used to be displayed for the view of the *biradari* and *baratis*. In fact dowry was a symbol of bride family's social and financial status. A poor might spend his life's earnings on his daughter's dowry. The dowry included clothes, kitchen utensils, household items, jewellery and sometimes cash. In present times the exhibition of dowry has stopped but it is still given, albeit quietly.

### 23. Post-wedding ceremonies

**Bidayi (Vidayi):** The departure of the bride is called *bidai*. This marks a formal separation between the daughter and her parents. *Bidai* ceremony is generally held in the early morning hours when stars are still shining. *Bidai* an intensely emotional event for the bride and her family marked by heart rending folk songs (nowadays film songs are played). In olden days, the bride used to be carried to the groom's house in a *doli* (palanquin) but presently newlywed couple often leaves in a car.

When the bridal party returns home with the bride, the couple is received by groom's mother, sisters, and relatives with welcome songs. Mustard oil is poured on the threshold (*tael chona*) before the couple enters the house. A series of rituals follow, like seating of the groom's younger brother (*devar*) in bride's lap, untying of *gana*-where bride and groom untie the each other's *ganaas*, and then go for *lassi mundari/chhap ritual*, where the couple vies with other to search the ring, immersed in a *parat* (metal tray) full of *lassi* (butter milk).

It is customary for the couple to offer obeisance to their



family's sacred place. This is called as *rakade* or *rakhade* ceremony wherein the couple accompanied by family members, goes to shrine of family deity and seek his/her blessings for their successful future married life. A feast is also held by groom's family called as '*chaab*'.

When the bride arrives at the groom's house after wedding, she is not expected to perform any housework until her *mehandi*-henna fades away. The day when she cooks for the first time in her husband's house, the occasion is also celebrated and she is asked to prepare a sweet dish. *Raphera*: After staying with her in-laws for some time, bride's return visit to her mother's home with *pajekein* (those members from bride's home who had gone along with her to in-law's place), is called as *raphera*.

## 24. Before and After Death Ceremonies

In case the death of a family member is imminent, then some pre-death rituals are observed. He/she is brought down from the cot and put on floor. This is termed *puhnjaan tuarna*. To die on bed is considered as inauspicious. This is followed by the ritual *rakasas mansana* that is to make the dying person do the *daan* of cereals and other food items, clothes, utensils and also *go-daan* (the ritual *daan* of a cow). As it is believed that it is the cow which takes the soul across the *Vaitarni River*.<sup>23</sup> A lamp is also lit beside the dying person called as *diya-batti dena*. Then *Ganga Jal*, *Tulsi* and *Panjratani* (five metals) are put in dying person's mouth.

Immediately after the death, family members close the mouth and eyes of the deceased, and put the arms straight and wrap up the body in white cotton cloth. The body is placed on the floor with the head pointing towards the north



and the feet towards south which is the direction of the dead.

## 25. Cremation

When the time of cremation comes, the body is bathed, by male or female relatives in accordance to the sex of the deceased, with purified water and then dressed in new clothes, generally unstitched. If the dead is male or a widow then white clothes are used, whereas in case of a married woman with her husband still alive or a young unmarried girl, the body is dressed either in red or yellow. The dead body which may be adorned with ornaments, is placed on a *kira*-wooden board/stretcher. The relatives and others also put *kaffans*, (shrouds) brought along by them, on the dead body. The funeral procession called as *nadoaa* (*arthi*), starts with the blowing of the *sankha*. In case the dead person is an old man or woman who has lived a full life, the stretcher is decorated with buntings and dried coconuts and some time a band is also played at the time when bier is carried on shoulders of close relatives to the cremation ground. Nowadays, most of the dead in urban centers are carried in hearse, especially if the cremation ground is situated at a distance.

The cremation ground, called *shamshana*, is traditionally located near a river bank or a source of water like a spring and pond. All rituals are conducted by a *charji* (colloquial from of *Acharya*, the Maha Brahman). These include *pind-chhodan*, *baltah* etc. A pyre is prepared, on which the corpse is laid. The ornaments, if any, are removed. Thereafter, the chief mourner (generally the eldest son for those who have children; husband of the childless married women; brother of the unmarried person) walks around the pyre three times



keeping the body to his left. While walking, he sprinkles rose essence mixed water and sometimes ghee onto the pyre. He then lights a small fire and ignites the pyre called as *lamboo laana*.

When the fire has nearly consumed the body, the rite of *kapal kirya* (breaking of the skull) is performed. The mourners then return home where most of them take bath and wash clothes. In Duggar the ladies of the deceased family do not accompany the funeral procession. Instead they go to a separate enclosure in the cremation ground or a temple to take bath.

## 26. Mourning

Cremation is followed by a mourning period which usually ends on the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup> day or 17<sup>th</sup> day after death. During mourning period the family of the dead is bound by many rules and regulations of ritual impurity. The *charji* continues to visit the house of mourning and after three days of the cremation, the chief mourner along with family members and relatives in company of *charji*, returns to the cremation ground for *phull chunana* ritual (collection of *astis*-mortal remains). The *asthis* are collected after a *puja* and put in an urn. These *astis* are then immersed in a river in one's vicinity or other local *tirthas* and is called *phull taarna*. Those who can afford go to sacred places like Kankhal in Haridwar or Mattan in Kashmir to perform the rite of immersion of the mortal remains. The Hindus of Jammu region generally immerse *astis* at local *tirthas* like Purmandal, Akhnoor, Haridwar in Sudhmahadev or other such sacred places with a perennial water source.



## 27. Dasmaan (Das Din)

The ritual observed on the tenth day after death, is called as *dasmaan* or *das din*. Family members and relatives go to a temple or any other community space where there is a water source and perform purifying ritual in which family members wash their clothes and take bath (In olden times it was customary to abstain from taking a bath, change clothes and shave during the mourning period). In the evening, members of the in-laws family formally come to mourn and share the grief. This is called as *peekiyein di kann* or *kann makaan*. The members of the dead person's family also reciprocate the visit which is called as *modami makaan*. On the eleventh day the *kirya karam* is held. It is believed that if the funeral rites are not performed or are performed incorrectly, the spirit of the dead person will not achieve salvation and will roam around as spirit. The rites generally last for ten, eleven or thirteen days, at the end of which the deceased's soul is believed to have joined the abode of the ancestors. Thereafter, the departed soul is offered homage during the *shraddha* only.

## 28. Shraddha

According to *Garuda Purana*, after thirteen days of the death, soul starts its journey for *Yamapuri* and it takes seventeen days to reach there. The soul travels through *Yamapuri* for another eleven months and only in twelfth month it reaches to the court of *Yamaraj*. During the period of eleven months it has no access to the food and water. It is believed that *pindadan* and *tarpan* done by the son and family members satisfy the hunger and the thirst of the soul during its journey. Hence *shraddha* rituals are considered very important during first year of the death.



*Shraddha* ritual is observed in *Pitra Paksha*, (*Krishna Paksha* of *Assoo*-October-November) the period of fifteen lunar days when Dogras like other Hindus pay homage to their ancestors, especially through food offerings. When the death date of the deceased person in the family is not known according to Hindu calendar then his or her *shraddha* is performed on the last day of *pitra paksha* which is also the day to do *shraddha* for all long-gone and anonymous ancestors.

*Shraadha* rituals consist of following main activities—*pinda-daan*, *tarpan* and feeding the Brahmins. *Pindadaan* is the offering of rice, cow's milk, ghee, sugar and honey in form of *pinda* (rounded heap of the offering) to the ancestors. *Pinda-daan* is done with devotion, sentiments and respect to the deceased soul. *Tarpan* is the offering of the water mixed with *til* (black sesame), *jo* (Barley), *kusha* grass and white flour. It is believed that ancestors are appeased by the process of *tarpan*. Feeding the Brahmin is necessary to complete the *shraddha* ritual. Offering to the crows, cow and dog are also made before food is served to Brahmins.

In Dogras, the rituals, which are observed till four years after death, include *masak*- the monthly rite, *addha barakhi*-half anniversary (after six months), *barakhi*- first anniversary and *chabari*-the rite of fourth death anniversary.



# Rituals and Ceremonies of Jammu Muslims

## 1. Jammu Muslims

The term Jammu Muslims is used here for those Muslims of the state of Jammu and Kashmir who inhabit the Jammu division of the state. Sharing life and its rhythms with Hindus, Sikhs and other religious groups in almost all cities, towns, villages, hamlets in hill and highland valleys, right from the south of the Pir Panjal and down to the northern plains of Punjab—Muslims with their shared socio-cultural practices constitute a fusion of heterogeneous ethno-lingual groups in all ten districts of Jammu. The non-Kashmiri Muslims of Uri, Karnah, Titwal, and Gurez along with Muslims in the Pakistan-occupied parts like Muzzafrabad, Mirpur, Kotli, Bhimber, Sadhnoti and Poonch, could also be included in the above category on the basis of common ethnic and linguistic roots.

Jammu Muslims can be broadly put into four main categories. The Gujjars and Bakerwals, who are predominantly nomadic pastoral people and live mainly in parts of Poonch, Rajouri, Doda, the upper reaches of Udhampur, parts of Reasi, Samba, Kathua and Jammu districts. They form the second largest ethnic group of Muslims in J&K after Kashmiri Muslims.

In the second category are the Muslims of Poonch, Rajouri, Bhimber, Pakistan-occupied areas such as Muzzafrabad, Mirpur, Kotli, and Pulandari. Many of them are Rajputs with caste names like Rathore, Manhas, Jamwal, Jats etc. These Muslims form a distinct ethno-lingual group and are called as Pahari Muslims and their language is also



called Pahari language.

The Dogra Muslims living in the districts of Jammu, Samba, Kathua and Udhampur and having relatives in Sialkot, Narowal, Shakargarh areas of Pakistan form the third category. They speak Dogri and Punjabi.

The fourth category is that of Muslims of Doda and Kishtwar who speak Kashmiri\Siraji. "Being contiguous to the Kashmir Valley and borders of Ladakh region as well as Dogra heartland, the people of this area apart from speaking native tongues also understand and speak Kashmiri, Dogri, Punjabi and Urdu"<sup>24</sup>.

## 2. Dogra Muslims

"The Muslims inhabiting the kandi and hilly tract popularly called as Duggar Desh are called Dogra Muslims and are mostly converted from Dogra Hindus, conversions having taken place during Mughal period. They carry with them the remnants of their early faith. The common communities that can be found among Dogra Muslims are *Chib, Manhas, Choudhary, Rathore, Thakur, Jaral* etc".<sup>25</sup> "The distinctiveness of caste among the Muslims of Jammu is maintained through such features as endogamy, occupation and social interaction".<sup>26</sup>

Dogra Muslims strictly adhering to Islamic tenets and practices also perform local customs in day to day rituals and ceremonies. While Islamic religious rites of passage act as a marker for distinguishing Jammu Muslims from other religious communities, the observance of cultural practices and ceremonies typical to the region emerge as a common denominator within the shared cultural context.



### 3. Birth

The rituals and ceremonies related to passage of life in a Muslim home in Jammu start right from the conception of a child. The expectant mother, as a practice is invited to visit her parental home where generally she gives birth to her first child. After the delivery, she is given the ritual cleansing bath and made to eat *panjeeri* (*sund*) made of wheat flour, ghee, sugar and dry fruits. Being a patrilineal society, birth of a male child is an occasion for celebration and rejoicing amongst Jammu Muslims, and most of the rituals and ceremonies are held for the newly born male child only. The birth of a female child used to be a low key affair. But in contrast with the past and when two or one child is becoming a norm, the arrival of a female child in a family is also now being celebrated.

After the birth of a male child, a learned man holds the child and whispers in his right ear the *Azaan*. The male child is given '*gurti*' the liquid food-in form of honey by the male member of father's family who is considered as the one who could be a model character for the child. It is also customary to give *badhaai* (gift of cash) to the *Khusras* (Hijras/Eunuchs), *Marasis* and *Bhands* (traditional entertainers) who come and sing and dance to bless the newborn.

### 4. Aqiqah

Hosted by child's parents at their home or a community place, the *aqiqah* or welcoming celebration, is an event designed to celebrate the child's birth and welcome him or her to the community. On the occasion, the family slaughters one or two lambs or goats, and their meat is given away to the poor and deserving relatives. Then a large community



meal is served to relatives, friends, and neighbors. Many guests bring gifts for the newly born and the parents.

In addition to prayers and well-wishes for the baby, the *aqiqah* is also the occasion when the child's hair is first cut or shaved, which is locally called as *Chahnd*. The elder of the family as per the weight of the hair removed, gives silver along with sugar, atta and sweets to the *nai*. At this event, the baby's name is officially announced. For this reason, it is sometimes referred to as a naming ceremony, although there is no official procedure or ceremony involved. Jammu Muslims also consider this ceremony as offering of *sadka* or *shukrana*. It is taken as *nazar-uttarni*—to ward off ill-effects of an evil eye.

## 5. Khutna

*Khutna* or circumcision is a ritual of great importance and rejoicing. It involves removal of foreskin of the penis of a newly born child. Islamic sources do not fix a particular time for circumcision. In Jammu Muslims the practice is to do the circumcision within eight days after birth.

*Khutna* in Jammu Muslims used to be done by the *nai*—the family barber. Following inherited set of skills, the barber would stretch the fore skin of child's penis; hold it by a single cleft stick and then cut it with one cut of the razor and apply medicine for quick healing of cut. The *nai* was given presents of cash as well as kind. Nowadays the *khutna* of a child is done under medical supervision in nursing homes and hospitals. The occasion is celebrated with great joy according to the status of a family. When a child grows up he is sent for *dini-talim* to a *maktab* to learn basic teachings of the Holy Quran.



## 6. Marriage

Marriage constitutes an important base out of which kinship relations grow and are sustained. The most important feature of the Muslim marriage and kinship life is the constant effort to maintain a balance between adherences to Islam on the one hand and to adjust and adopt to the local socio-cultural milieu on the other. The various castes among Dogra Muslims follow kinship rules that are similar to that of contemporary Hindu castes because of the conversion of people from Hinduism to Islam.

According to a study conducted by scholars<sup>27</sup> the Jammu Muslims while maintaining the endogamous marriage (the custom of marrying only within the limits of a clan or tribe), the marriages also are being solemnized in both patrilineal and matrilineal forms. The patrilineal group among the Muslims is called as khandaan or biradari.

In present times with education leading to increased employment opportunities and higher standards of living, the social class is acquiring new meaning and marital relations. Like in other communities and castes, marriages are increasingly being formed on the basis of economic and official status. Furthermore, instead of the traditional practice of the parents initiating the marriage proposals, nowadays like in other religious groups and communities, the young Muslim males and females who come in contact with each other at work places, educational institutions or elsewhere, after accepting each other, approach their parents for formalizing marriage proposals. With the result the love/arranged marriages are also being observed among Jammu Muslims.

However several ceremonies associated with Muslim



marriages such as *Nikah*, *Rukhsati*, *Muhn Dikhayi* (face showing) are observed in all forms of marriages. The institution of *Mehar* is also common feature of marriage in Muslim communities.

## 7. Kurmayee

Marriage is nearly always preceded by *kurmayee* the formal betrothal. After some preliminary negotiations conducted by a *rawara*-middleman or kinsman, a date is appointed upon which the boy's father or other senior relative go to the house of girl's father with some presents and places some cash in the girl's hand as a token. Presents are made and women sing folk songs. There is exchange of gifts on *Eid*.

The date of marriage is fixed at another meeting, according to the lunar calendar, accompanied by ceremonies and courtesies arranged at the instance of the boy's father. In olden times, after fixing the date of marriage, the parents of both parties use to dispatch presents to their more distant relatives and friends through the hands of the *nai* who received small presents of money, or of grain at each house. This was called as *Gandd* or *Ganddiyan*, which was the first formal announcement of the marriage to relatives and community members.

## 8. Tel-Mehandi

Before the wedding, the ceremony of *Tel-Mehandi*—anointing with oil is performed. In the afternoon the female relatives assemble and sing at the houses of the bride and bridegroom. From this day till the wedding day, the betrothed do no work but get good food. Women of both the houses



assemble and sing songs (*geets*) in late evenings till the day of marriage. After singing of *geets*, it was customary to treat the assembled ladies with *katlamas* and *desi chai* and also give as take-away sweets like *patashas*, *gur* or dry fruits.

Till the recent past, apart from playing an important role in pre- marriage exchange of communication and gifts between the two families, the *nai*, also acted as a cook, especially cooking the *deg*, while the *nain*, barber's wife, helped the ladies in household chores. The cash and gifts in kind given to the *nai* and *nain* for their services during the marriage ceremony were called as '*lagg*'.

## 9. Day of marriage & Janj

On the day of marriage, the ceremony of bathing the bridegroom with *butna* takes place in presence of relatives and neighbors. He is dressed in new clothes and puts on a *sehra*-chaplet in a ceremony called as *Sehrabandi*. At this time *tamol*-wedding gifts are given by assembled relatives. The amount of *tamol* used to be written down with comments on each *bartan* by an individual or a family such as *inna ditta* (so much given) and *inna baadha* (so much is more).

### 9.1. Janj (Barat-Marriage Procession)

After the customary *tamol* ceremony, the bridegroom was made to sit on a mare while his younger brother or a relative (*ccharpala*) sits behind him. The wedding procession, the *janj* or barat is known as *janj chahdni*. The ladies sing folk songs and throw coins and dry fruits- *paisse varne*- over the head of groom sitting on the mare. At the occasion, the *bhabhi* (brother's wife) puts *surma* (kohl) into bridegroom's eyes and the sister offers grain to the mare and holds its reins. It is



called *baag phadai* for which they receive cash presents.

## 10. Milni, Nikah, Rukhsati

On arrival at the village\house of the bride the marriage party is received by the senior and respectable people of the family, locality. Then the formal welcome and meeting of male members from both families called *milni* is held. It is only after the *milni* that guests accompanying bridegroom and his father enter into the bride house.

After this the *nikah*- marriage contract is performed by the Maulvi. The *nikhas* are two types: *Vakalatan* and *Asaaltan*. In the first type of *nikah*, the bridegroom is not present but is represented by a *vakil*. While in the second type, the bridegroom is present. There is also a custom of hiding the shoes of the groom by sister-in-laws (*boot shupaana*) and which are returned after the groom gives some money as gift to the girls.

The marriage party adjourns to some large building or community space arranged for the purpose and where guests are treated to the marriage feast. Till a few decades ago the menu of such feasts comprised gosht pulao, *jarda*, and one *salan* (mutton dish). Nowadays elaborate buffet are served with stalls of cold drinks, snacks, eight to ten dishes, sweets and other savouries.

After the *rukhasati* of the bride is held, the *baraat* returns to the groom's home along with bride. The couple is welcomed at threshold of the house with a *sadka* of a black cock, sheep or a goat. The bride is also asked to read a few lines from the Holy Quran. Till recent past, it was a custom to put on display for relatives and neighbors the dowry brought by the bride. The bride, after staying at her in-laws house for



two or three days returns to her parents. Her husband later on goes to fetch her back to his home.

## 11. Death

Holy water from *Zamzam* well at Mecca is given to the dying man to ease out his death. The face of the dying person is usually turned towards *qibla* (direction of Mecca). *Sura-i-yasin* or other verses related to pardon for sins are read near the dying person and he also reads them. After death, the dead body is given *gussal* (bath), wrapped in a white cloth (*kafan*) and placed in a *tabut* (wooden box). Similar to the wooden stretchers which are always available in cremation grounds for Hindus, the *tabuts* are also always in readiness in Muslim graveyards.

The dead body is taken in form of a procession to the *Janazah-Ghah* where *Namaz-e-Janaza*, the prayer of the dead is offered under the Imam (Qazi, Moulavi, religious head). Mourners assembled on the occasion stand in rows and Muslim priest goes to the dead body and utters *taqbir* four times in loud voice. Then all the others who are standing recite verses from the Quran and also pray for peace and benefit of the departed soul.

The corpse wrapped in white shroud is carried in a wooden box to the graveyard where it is taken out of the wooden box and buried in the grave which is dug from north to south. The dead body is placed in the grave with the face towards *qibla*. The grave is then covered with wooden or cement slabs. Mourners including non-Muslims put clean earth thrice over the closed grave. The members of the funeral party recite *fatiha* for the benefit of departed soul. *Qutbas* (grave stones) are also erected usually with an



inscription indicating dead person's name and date of the death—to preserve the memory of the dead.

## 12. Rituals and Ceremonies of Pahari Muslims

The Pahari Muslims of Jammu are the Muslims of Poonch, Rajouri, Bhimber, Pakistan-occupied Areas such as Muzzafrabad, Mirpur, Kotli and Pulandari. Many of them have origins in Rajputs with caste names like Rathor, Manhas, Jamwal, Jats etc. Like the Dogra /Punjabi Muslims of Jammu, these form a distinct ethno-lingual group and strictly follow Islamic practice with local variations in rituals and ceremonies.

The majority of Muslim Rajputs in Rajouri-Poonch districts claim their origin from Rajasthan, Gujrat, Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. Though the Muslim faith is against belief of a person being born from Sun, Moon, and Fire, Pahari Muslim Rajputs feel pride in their Rajput roots. They often refer to the bravery of their ancestors in the battle fields of the past and they extend equal status to the parallel clan that is Hindu Rajputs. Still they like to serve in armed forces<sup>28</sup>.

Like the Hindu Rajputs who have been classified into various sub castes like *Thakers*, *Manhas*, *Chauhan*, *Thakyal*, *Chandail*, *Charrak*, *Kamlak*, and *Chib*, Muslim Rajputs have been further divided in to various sub castes such as, *Jarral*, *Malik*, *Domal*, *Thakyal*, *Khokhar*, *Janjua*, *Salahria*, *Bhatti*, *Feerozal*, *Gakkhad*, *Manhas*, *Manial*, *Chib*, *Thakkar*, *Kamlak* etc. As such there are more than 54 sub-castes of Muslim Rajputs which exist in the area.



### 13. Marriage

The first step in preparation of marriage for any Pahari family, like in other communities of the region, is the renovation and decoration of the house.

**13.1. *Diahre Bananha*:** The responsible representative from the *Shwale* (bridegroom's) side, goes to bride's place and fixes the date of marriage.

**13.2. *Chawal Chhattna (Winnowing of Rice)*:** In this ritual young girls of the family and neighborhood gather to winnow the rice that is to be used during the marriage. The cleaning of rice as per custom takes place under open sky or on roof of a house. The participating girls are treated to tea and given sweets.

**13.3. *Sir Kholna (Undoing of Bride's hair)*:** In this ritual, would-be-bride's *mindis*—small intricate braids are undone. The first *mind*i is undone by her brother, then other *mindis* by her paternal cousin brothers and sisters. After this a feast is held in which rice and plain mutton dish is served.

**13.4. *Dosti Lagana (Bonding a Friendship)*:** There is a custom that a bride creates friendship bond with a young girl from the neighborhood or from relatives called as Dharma Bahen. Similarly the groom also makes a girl his sister, who is called as Dharam Bahen. The groom also has a friend.

**13.5. *Mehandi Khardna (Taking the Henna)*:** It is a custom that five-seven girls from the groom's family accompanied by a male member go to the bride's place with Henna in



basket that also contains sweets, dresses and ornaments. They are welcomed with folk songs and treated to a mini feast.

**13.6. Mehendi Kholna:** The ceremony of putting the *mehandi* sent to each other in a pot, is observed in the houses of bride and the groom. The *mehandi* is mixed with water, tea leaves, oil, almonds and wall nut etc and kept aside.

**13.7. Dost Liaana (Bringing the friend):** On the evening when *mehandi* is to be applied, it is customary for party members of bride's or groom's house to go dancing on beats of drums to a friend or *dharam bahen*'s house to invite him or her for the *mehandi* ceremony. This inviting party is treated to a tea and snacks. The friend or *dharam bahen* then along with others from his/her family members, neighbors, accompanies the party back to the bride's or grooms house.

#### **14. Mehendi Raat:**

On the night of *mehandi* the neighbors, relatives and others guests are served rice and wazwan (multi-course meal in which dishes are meat-based-lamb, chicken). Men generally eat first.

After dinner, the applying of *mehandi* starts. The bride's and groom's sisters carry the *mehandi* pot which is placed on a layer of rice in a basket along with lamp, or candle and packets of *mehandi* (in present times a cake is also added). All the things are placed in a big room or under a *shamiana*-awning. The *dharam bahen* applies *mehandi* on the right finger of the groom and gives some cash as a gift. Then other relatives apply *mehandi* to the groom and give



gifts of in cash.

In case of the bride, a girl, who is quite skillful in the craft, applies *mehandi* on the bride's hands and feet. Other girls present on the occasion also apply *mehandi* paste on their hands and feet. Then the cake is cut and distributed in the congregation.

The men dance Bhangra to the tune of dhol and also play *gittka* which is a mock sword fight between two players who instead of swords use sticks. The girls play '*manga*'. While the dance etc is going on, one person keeps the records of cash and other gifts received on the occasion.

### 15. Pani Kappana (Fetching of Water)

Next day, a few ladies, young girls from respective houses of marriage go singing and dancing to a nearby spring to fetch water. The groom's *dharma bahen* in company of girls, singing folk songs, carries a colorful earthen pot and places it under the spout of falling water. Then the brother/cousin of bride or groom *cuts (kappana)* the falling water and *dharam bahen* carries the water filled pot back to the house of marriage where the pot of water is mixed with water to be used for bathing bride or groom. In the backdrop of folk songs, the groom, after the bath, dresses up a *khan* dress and a *waiscoat* or a suit. The bride is dressed up in red or green suit- shalwar and kurta. A feast is served to relatives, friends and members of the *baradari*-community. In olden times, maize bread, curd or butter milk was offered but nowadays, rice and *wazwan* is served.

The rest of the marriage ceremonies, like the marriage party, its welcome by the bride's family, hiding of groom's shoes and fixing of *mehar* and *nikah*, almost follow the



north-Indian Muslims rituals.

## 16. Post Marriage Ceremonies

**16.1. *Tamman*:** In olden times before the *rukhsati* of the bride an object used to be tied on the top of the tree and someone from the marriage party was supposed to shoot/strike with a gun or hand. Then only the bride would proceed to the groom's house.

**16.2. *Bugdar*:** An old time practice related to departure of the bride to groom's house by lifting a *bugdar* (a piece of tree stem or a round stone weighing more than one hundred kilos). Until someone from the marriage party lifted it, the *rukhsati*- departure of bride could not take place. Foreseeing such a situation, it was customary to include a wrestler as member of the marriage party. At the time of *rukhsati* the bride was sent in a *doli*-palanquin but in present times the married couple mostly leaves in a car.

**16.3. *Pul Taar*:** The driver of car or other mode of transport, when crossing over a bridge, stops the vehicle and asks for some gift. Only after he is given some cash or presents, he agrees to start the vehicle.

## 17. Welcome of Barat

In the groom's house, the welcome of the couple and marriage party is done with firing of crackers, serving of sweets and dances like *bhangra*, *gittka* and *manga*.

**17.1. *Buah Pakadai*: (*Blocking of Doorway*):** The sister of groom who stands in the doorway stops the couple and



members of the marriage party from entering the house till she is given some gifts. After she receives gift of cash, she moves away from the door and marriage party enters the house.

**17. 2. *Ghunghat Chukkana: (Lifting of the Veil):*** In this ceremony groom's mother lifts the veil of bride and gifts her a ring. The bride is also supposed to read some pages of the Holy Quran on the occasion.

**17.3. *Muhn Dikhai:*** After the arrival of the bride, the ladies from the neighborhood and in relations come to see the face of the bride and give her gifts in cash.

## **18. *Biyah Diyaan Murdna***

On the seventh or eleventh day after the marriage, the bride accompanied by groom and ten to fourteen members from her in-laws family, returns to her parental house. There she is ceremoniously received and everyone is treated to a grand feast. Other than the bride and groom, the rest of the party returns back. Similarly after some days, the bride in company of some members from her parent's side goes back to the groom's house where she and others are also ceremoniously welcomed.

The majority of the Pahari Muslims observes caste endogamous marriage. In the past polygamy pattern was also practised but major change has taken place in this custom as not many people prefer more than one wife. The dowry system is very simple. The majority gives buffaloes, cows, goats, sheep, spinning wheel and other domestic materials as dowry, whereas a few have started imitating



the modern practices of dowry system and spend large amounts according to their income bracket. Though Pahari Muslims Rajputs follow Islamic tenets, the earlier practices like engaging Hindu prouhits to do pooja and the time of *Nikah*, is still followed in remote areas. But such instances are increasingly on the decline.

## 19. Rituals and Ceremonies of Gujjars and Bakerwals

Gujjars and Bakerwals form the second-largest ethnic group in Jammu province and third largest ethnic group in State of Jammu and Kashmir, after Kashmiris and Dogras. Known for their nomadic and semi-nomadic life style, Gujjars and Bakerwals inhabit all 12 districts of Jammu region. "Gujjars and Bakerwals follow their own kinship tradition and maintain their culture and tradition to a large extant. Traditionally the Gujjars and Bakerwals of J&K recognize three principle kinship groups known as *dera* (household), the *dada-potra* (lineage) and *gotra*".<sup>29</sup> There are more than one hundred *gotras* of Gujjars. "The names of the Gujjar and Bakerwal clans of J&K are the same as those found among Hindu Gujjars in other parts of the country"<sup>30</sup>. They speak a dialect called Gojri.

After Independence, with spread of education and other amenities of life, the traditional occupational structure has considerably changed. The Gujjars who had been a nomadic tribe are increasingly opting for a sedentary life. Though animal rearing is still practiced, arable agriculture has also become popular among the Gujjars.

From the occupation point of view the Gujjars of Jammu and Kashmir are divided into three main categories: 1. *Banhara* or *Dodhi* (producing and trading milk and milk



products) 2. *Zamindar* (practicing arable agriculture along with livestock rearing) and 3. Others (nomadic graziers and other professionals).<sup>31</sup>

By faith all Gujjars-Bakerwals of Jammu and Kashmir are followers of Islam. Within the limits defined by the general tenets of Islam, they also exhibit an elaborate set of ceremonies as part of their folk\tribal system.

Within the Bakerwal and Gujjars groups in areas of Poonch and Rajouri, certain variations are found in terms of style of dress, cuisine etc. One group traces its origin to Rajasthan, Gujrat areas while the other to Hazara, Swat or Bannu areas which are presently part of Pakistan.

Since Gujjar-Bakerwals are on the move most of the year, their social and cultural traditions are strongly influenced by a migratory pattern.

## 20. Birth

The birth of a child like in other communities is a festive event for Gujjars. Relatives and neighbors bring new clothes for the newly born child. They also bring presents in a big *punyater* (large pan used to knead the flour). *Mirasis* sing traditional Gojri song *Ghurty* on the occasion and receive gifts.<sup>32</sup>

**20.1. *Khutno/Khutna* (Circumcision):** *Khutna* or circumcision, called *Khutno* in Gojari is a ritual of great importance. The male child is dressed up and garlanded like a bridegroom. The circumcision ceremony is performed in day time by inviting friends, relatives and neighbors amidst beating of drums. The guests give gifts to the family of the child. The assembly of invited people is treated to a feast.



The circumcision that is the removal of the foreskin of child's penis is conducted in the same manner as is followed by other Muslims.

## 21. Marriage

The Gujjar-Bakerwal ideal holds that the marriage of an individual should be arranged by his parents or by his senior relatives in case his or her parents are not alive. Gujjar-Bakerwals avoid marrying the children of the same mother, foster brothers and sisters and sister's and brother's children. Furthermore, they also keep away from marrying their patrilineal descendents. Marriage within the boy's patrilineal *gotra* was avoided and some families even avoided marrying their sons into their own and their wives' *gotras*. However, such restrictions are no longer strictly adhered to and marriages within one's *gotra* as well as in one's mother's *gotra* are becoming quite common. The Gujjar Bakerwals recognize marriage with both parallel and cross cousins to be legitimate. However, instances of such marriages are extremely rare. Gujjar-Bakerwals prefer that the first marriage of their children should take place within their community, thus, as far as possible they try to arrange the marriage of their children within the community<sup>33</sup>.

## 22. Mallno/ Mall Bahni

With regards to solemnizing marriages within the close knit circle of relatives, the custom of *Mallno* or *Mall Bahni* has a special importance among Gujjars. As soon as a girl is born, her mother or mother's sister, *daadi* or *nani*, comes and ties a thread on the wrist of the new born and reserves her (*Mall Dalana*) as the future bride for a child in her family.



Thus as per the custom of *mall*, the new born girl is held in trust by her parents for the relative who has reserved her soon after her birth.

Due to non-availability of proper matches among nomad tribes, such custom of reserving the newly born girl as the future wife for a male child in the family ensured a matrimonial alliance at the convenience of both parties.

The ceremonies connected with marriage have been directly influenced by the mode of life of Gujjars and Bakerwals. Till a few decades back, child marriage was a common practice among Gujjars and well-to-do Gujjar and Bakerwals used to hold the *mangani* (engagement ceremony) of children at an early age of about eight years followed by *nikah* (marriage). Whereas *rukhasati* (the departure of the bride from her parental house), was effected after five years from the date of *nikah*. But in present times child marriage is very uncommon as most of Gujjars-Bakerwals are marrying their children after they become adults.

**22.1. Saak/ Nato Mangno (Arranging the Marriage):** In case there is no *mall*, the parents of marriageable Gujjar youth, look around for a family of equal social position. If the chosen family has a daughter of suitable age and appearance, enquiries are set going through an intermediary (*rawaro-bicholo*) who approaches the girl's family. The offer for marriage is always made by the boy's side as any initiative by family of girl is considered improper in Gujjars and Bakerwals.<sup>34</sup> -

### **23. Bhaandae Bahni/Ganddiyan/Mangani**

To further consolidate the *mall* or *saak/nato*, the



ceremony of *Bhaandae Bahni/Ganddiyan/Mangani* is observed by both families. In this ceremony of *Bhaandae Bahni*, some money and clothes are put in a utensil by the family of the boy and presented to the girl's family. In some areas this ceremony is called as *Ganddiyan* (the word comes from Ganddi, a cloth bundle in which some cloth/es, *sheerni*, *gur* and other presents are wrapped in). The ceremony is observed to further seal the alliance between two families.

### **23.1. *Diyaada Baddhna (Fixing the Date of Marriage):***

*Din Mathna* or *Diyaada Baddhna*, is first among marriage related ceremonies. For this, on a prearranged day, elders from would-be-groom's family go to the would-be-bride's family to discuss and finalize the date and day of the marriage and the *barat*-marriage party. While finalizing of dates of marriage, folk beliefs about inauspicious and auspicious days are kept in mind. This means avoiding days like Tuesday and Wednesday, which are considered inauspicious. The days of lunar month like 3, 13, 23, 8, 18, 28, are also considered not lucky. The day when the moon is waning, or in Arabic months like Safar, Muharram and Shawal, or days between the two Eids, marriages are not solemnized. Marriages generally take place during summers (month of *Baisakh*) and also during month of *Manghar*-October-November, when Gujjars-Bakerwals come down from their summer *Dhoks*, *Behakaans*, to their winter homes and have more time to spare.<sup>35</sup>

After *mangani*, the boy and girl are not allowed to meet and the marriage is generally solemnized within a year. The long gap between *mangani* and the marriage is not considered good in Gujjars. Marriage among Gujjars and Bakerwals is



a simple ceremony. But it is preceded with following rituals and ceremonies:

## 24. Bringing Gatti from a Ziarat

*After Diyaada Baddana*, few ladies from the house where marriage is to be celebrated, go to a nearby Ziarat, and bring a small stone pebble-*Gatti* (*Dogri-Geeti*) from the grave of a Pir, Faqir or some elder or from the courtyard of the Ziarat, which is placed with great reverence on the hearth of the home where daily meals are cooked. As per folk belief, this ensures favorable and clear weather during the days of marriage. After all marriage functions are over, the *Gatti* is removed from the hearth and put back in its original place.

**24.1. Saado-Marriage Invitation:** *Diyaada Baddana* is followed by *saado*, that is extending invitation to community members. If it is a general *saado* and only for men folk, then a smart and alert young man is entrusted to go to each house and announce the date of marriage and related functions and extend invitation: (imaginative illustration of such an invitation) “*14 basaikh, Diyadi Veervar, raat Jumma ki, Fazal Din ka bada gera, Gulam Hussian ko biyah muqarrar aye. Lakdiaan te dudd sameit saado aaiye* (On 14<sup>th</sup> Baisakh, day of Thursday, night of Friday, the marriage of Fazal Din’s elder son, Gulam Hassan, has been fixed. You are invited. Please come with fire wood and milk). If the invitation includes both men and women from a family, then the young man is accompanied by two or more young girls who extend invitations to women for specific marriage rituals, ceremonies such as *Saado* for *Mitti Khunano*, *Paani Bharno*, *Teil*, *Nihari*, *Mehandi*, *Reception of Barat* etc. The



invitation for *Barat* i.e., *the janj ko saado*, is communicated in particular.

**24.2. *Vaqfo-Pause*:** A Gujjar marriage is normally an eight day affair. If the marriage starts on one Thursday and finishes on the following Thursday, then, during this period the marriage related ceremonies and rituals are given a pause.<sup>36</sup>

## **25. Mitti Khunano (Clay Collection Ceremony)**

A few days before the marriage, preparations for plastering or white washing the walls of houses of bride and groom, start with procuring of clay which ladies of neighborhood dig out from a nearby source, fill in baskets and bring it to respective houses, amidst singing of folksongs. Sweets are distributed on this day. The ladies who bring the baskets of clay are given tea and light refreshment.

This ceremony starts by noon and finishes by evening<sup>37</sup>. Next day after the clay has been brought, the plastering/white washing of the house is undertaken by womenfolk. The final touches to the decoration of the house include painting the walls with folk motifs such as vines full of flowers etc., and sometimes a few lines of poetry are also written. The clean and sparkling house with wall paintings is a sure sign for every passerby to know that there is going to be a marriage ceremony in that house.

## **26. Lakaddi Cheerna (Woodcutting Ceremony)**

As part of preparations for marriage, the males of the neighborhood assemble for cutting and chopping of wood so that it is properly dried up on the day it is required for cooking the marriage feast.



**26.1. Kenchi Laan Gi Rasam (Applying of Scissors on Cloth):** This ceremony relates to an old time practice, when tailors used to come to houses of marriage to stitch clothes for the bride or groom, family members and relatives. The first cut on the cloth by scissor was celebrated, with singing of folk songs by ladies invited for the occasion. Sweets like *gur*, *mithai*, *patashas*, *makhana* etc were also distributed.

**26.2. Chawal Chhatai ki Rasam & Other Ceremonies:** *Chawal Chhatai ki Rasam (Rice Winnowing Ceremony)*, follows *Kenchi Laan Gi Rasam* and it continues for many days. It is followed by *Wood Cutting Ceremony*. Two days before *Tael Ceremony*, two kilos of rice and one kilo of *gur* is distributed among the non-Muslim families who do not partake the non-vegetarian feast served in some functions. This practice is also followed by non-Muslims when marriages are held in their families.

One day before *Tael Ceremony*, *Chor-Tael* ceremony is held during the night. This is done under the folk belief whosoever among the would- be-husband and wife, is applied the oil first, is going to be the dominant partner.

**26.3. Tael (Oil) Ceremony:** On the eve of *Tael* night, people come with gifts as token of love. After guests are treated to a feast, the *Tael* ceremony is held. Ladies sing folk songs and bride and groom at their respective houses are anointed with mustard oil.

## **27. Restrictions on Would- be-Groom & Bride**

Right after *Diyaada Baddana*, movements of the groom are restricted. He is not supposed to venture out for any sort



of work, not allowed to travel at night, move out of house in very early hours of the morning or very late at night. After *Tael* ceremony, he is never left alone, and is always accompanied by one male member. It is believed that angels surround the groom and act as protectors. The groom does not have to be privy to bad words, abuses and other unwanted situations and has to follow the instructions of elders. Similar restrictions are also applied on the bride. Would- be- Groom and would- be- bride are treated like a king and a queen and looked at with much respect. They are made to offer special prayers, mainly in favor of those young persons who are facing delay in getting married. Their *jootha pani* (half-drunk water) is also considered *pak* (pure/efficacious).

## 28. Biya Ko Dost and Dharam Bahen

In every Gujjar marriage there are one or more friends of the groom. The groom creates a formal bond of friendship with a young man, whose family is informed in advance and they, according to the tradition, send fire wood, milk etc as presents. The details of which are written down and equal or double the amount of such presents are sent back to them on other occasions like that of marriage. Similarly the bride also ties a formal friendship bond with a young girl from neighborhood or from relatives who are called *Dharam Bahen*. In the same manner the groom also makes a girl, his sister, who is called *Dharam Bahen*. Such relationships are treated on par with that of real sister or brother and nurtured for life, as far as possible, by all means including extending help to them in case of emergency.

**28.1 *Kachi—Pakki Nihari*:** There is a custom that one day



before the marriage, the invited guests bring along some uncooked and cooked food items. In case of *Kachi Nihari*, the guests bring uncooked rice etc. While in *Pakki Nihari*, the guests come with cooked dishes which are carried in utensils covered with beautifully embroidered handkerchiefs etc. During dinner, the guests are served the very dishes brought by them along with rice and *daal*, curd etc prepared by the host.

## 29. Mehandi

After partaking *Nihari*, ladies in the groom's house assemble in a large room to start the *mehandi* ceremony. They, while singing folk songs, go to the other room to bring along the would-be-groom, who sits there along with his friends. As part of custom called as *Dulha Chhupana Ki Rasam*, groom and his friends wrap themselves in same looking *lois*, (blankets) and sit together as a group of identical individuals only to pose a challenge to ladies to find out the groom among the same looking shapes and forms. The women while singing folk songs pick up one person amongst the lot and thinking him to be the groom remove his blanket. If the chosen person is not the groom but one of the friends, then the process of finding the groom starts once again and goes on till the groom is found out. This *rasam* is only held in the groom's house.

As far as *mehandi* is concerned, it is applied to both bride and the groom. The groom is made to sit on a low stool and his *dharam bahen* applies *mehendi*, while in case of the bride *mehandi* is applied on her hands and feet in shape of artistic floral and geometric designs.



### 30. Gaano Badhan Ki Rasam

*Gano* (called in Dogri as *Gaana*), is a colorful thread of silk or some other material, on which number of items such as beads, coconut, dried dates, buttons etc. are strung. It is fashioned eight days before the start of marriage by married ladies, or by the family of *dharam bahen* or friends. As per the custom, five or more *gaanas* are tied on the wrist of groom as well as bride in a separate ceremony. In some areas, it is tied during *teil* or *mehandi* ceremony by maternal, paternal cousin sisters or other young female relatives. In addition, one *ratti* (*ratti* seed ) wrapped in a silken kerchief is also tied with *gaano*. The *gaana* is thought to provide protection to would be bride and groom from ill effects of the evil eye. On this occasion the groom and bride are also given some cash as a gift.

### 31. Paani Bharna (Filling of Water)

On the day of marriage or day of *janj* (*barat*), the *dharam bahen* carrying an earthen pot on her head and in company of few girls goes to fetch water from a nearby source. The group also takes along a young man who does the *paani-kappan ki rasam* by cutting the flow of water with an iron knife or a sword, after which the earthen pot is filled with water. The girls throw water on the boy and cut jokes on him. Before lifting the water-filled pot, rice and sugar is added in its water. The group on their way back from the spring or a stream, sing folk songs such as *sitthniyan* in which jokes are cut on close relatives of the groom and bride, as the case may be. Upon reaching the doorstep of house, the girls before putting down the water-filled pot, insist on being treated with some sweetmeats.



By adding more water into water brought in the pot, the bride and groom are given a bath. Groom is given this ritual bath before he starts dressing up on the day of *janj* while the bride is made to bathe in this water before she is to leave in a *doli*.

### 32. The Day of Marriage

On the day of marriage, the bridegroom, after taking a ritual bath is covered in a blanket and taken to the roof top where tailor and barber are present with the groom's new dress which mostly comprises white *shalwar*, *kameez*, black *waist coat* and white *pagri/safa* as a headgear. The groom generally wears a colorful pair of *Jodi* on his feet.

On this occasion the friendship ceremony with two or more friends is also solemnized. *Mirasi/ladies* sing folk song such as *Ghodi (veer mero ghodi chadayo)* whereas barber and tailor help the groom wear the new dress. The barber showing a mirror teases the groom in good humor and praises his looks and personality. The Barber and tailor are paid gifts in cash by relatives who surround the groom.

Before the departure of *janj*, the *Sehra* (a chaplet of flowers tied round his head), which is locally made, is tied on turban of the groom in presence of elders and *moulvi*. *Mirasis*, who on beats of *dhols* sing folk songs in praise of groom receive *beil* (gift in form of cash) from relatives and friends.

Before the departure of *janj*, *surma* ceremony is held. In which *dharam bahen* and other ladies apply *surma* (kohl) in the eyes of the groom and receive from him some cash as gift. On this occasion, sweet rice or *halwa* is served to *janjis* (*baratis*).



### 33. Janj (Barat)

The marriage party departs with the bridegroom riding a horse. In Bakerwals many a times the entire Barat rides on horses, reflecting the status of the family. There is also beating of drums. No Gujjar festive event or ceremony is complete without beating of drums and dance.

The *janj*, which leaves amidst beating of drums, first goes to a nearby dargah of a Pir for offering flags, prayers (*duaa*) and *Niyaz*. This is called as Dahl Charana. On the way, *janj* is welcomed by community members and others who come out to have a look at the groom and usually stand with pot filled with milk. As per the tradition among Gujjars, it is customary to reciprocate with putting some money and gur in the pot.

**33.1. Reception of Janj:** The *janj* on its arrival at the bride's place, is received by her male relatives who stand in long rows and shake hands with each *janji*. While ladies who stand on roofs sing folk songs, the young girls shower flowers, *makhanas* and coins on the marriage party.

The ceremonies related to the welcome of the groom include Haar Khallan (Salam Ceremony), wherein the bridegroom is garlanded and then salaam is offered to him in shape of cash. Ceremonies of untying the bride's horse, offering milk to groom, application of *Surma* are also held.

### 34. Budgar and Tamman

The marriage party before entering into the bride's home is made to lift a *budgar* as a challenge. *Budgar*, a specially carved stone with a handle and weighing more than a quintal, is placed in an open space and as per custom has to



be successfully lifted by a *janji*, before the *janj* is allowed to enter bride's place.

In some places, along with *Budgar*, the ceremony of *Tamman* is also practiced. *Tamman* is a target in shape of pot or a leather bag which is hung in between two poles or from a high branch of a tree and *janjis* are challenged to strike it with a stone as a show of marksmanship. With the result it was a common practice to include a wrestler or a marksman in a *janj* to meet any challenge requiring a show of physical strength. Such public shows of physical strength/manliness and marksmanship are one of many tribal customs, including horse riding, which stand ingrained into daily rituals and ceremonies of Gujjars as continuation of their martial legacy.

### 35. Nikah

After reception of the *barat* and other ceremonies, the ceremony of *nikah* is held according to Islamic procedure, after taking the permission of the parents of the bride and groom. The bridegroom's father is required to fix the *mehr* at time of *nikah* in form of animals (sheep and goats), jewellery, money and other property.

After *Nikah*, the groom is taken to a room where he is welcomed by womenfolk who garland him and give some cash as gift. It is followed by offering *choori* to the groom by his sister-in-law.

In case, the *janj* stays for night at bride's place, then the *baitbazi* (recitation of poetry) goes on all through the night along with games like *bihni pakardna*. Young *janjis* spend the time by dancing to beats of drums.

Before departure of bride in the *doli*, the groom seeks permission of his mother-in-law, who blesses him by putting



some *tamol* in his turban.

**35.1. *Rukhsati*:** The bride is given farewell in presence of all relatives and neighbors. Before leaving, the bride with her back towards her parental home throws back a handful of rice and sugar as a gesture of wishing her family prosperity and happiness. All those who accompany the *doli*, are called as *Pacho*.

### **36. Reception of Doli/Bride**

*Doli* is received with the same joy and enthusiasm which is seen in the reception of *janj*: Womenfolk sing folk songs, shower wall nuts, *makhanas*, *patashas* at the *doli*, groom and the accompanying party.

Once the bride arrives at door of the groom's house her way is blocked by the groom's sister who stops the couple and others from entering the house till she is given some gifts. Only after receiving gift of cash, she moves away from the door and the marriage party enters the house. This ceremony is called as *Buhey Pakadai* (Blocking of Doorway). The bride carrying a pot full of milk on her head first puts her right foot inside the door while entering house of groom. She also showers a handful of rice as per the belief that this brings prosperity to the house. She along with accompanying *sahelis* (female friends) is made to sit at a designated place and are served milk.

**36.2. *Ghunghat Kholan Ki Rasam (Lifting of Veil)*:** After the bride enters the groom's house, the *Ghunghat Kholan Ki Rasam* ceremony is held in which youngest member of groom's family sits in her lap and has a look at her face. Then



other members of the family and relatives led by groom's mother have a look at her face, and give her gifts in cash. Folk songs are also sung on the occasion.

**36.3. Meil:** After the arrival of bride at groom's house, the groom's family holds *Meil*, which is a formal dinner served in to relatives, friends and community members. On this occasion of celebration and happiness the guest are served with a fare that includes mutton, rice, dal, curd, vegetable and *ghee-shakkar*. After dinner, which is served early in the evening, the family members and friends sing and dance and engage in fun and frolic by playing games like *bihni pakadani*, reading of books, and telling jokes etc.

### 37. Death

According to a folk belief in Gujjars, death always comes in garb of an excuse<sup>38</sup>. The Gujjars-Bakerwals bury their dead according to Islamic rites. If a death occurs during the 'migration' then the dead is buried along the route and the grave is marked by a heap of stones. Whenever the family members pass by the grave of dead during seasonal migrations, they pay respect to the departed soul and light a lamp on the grave.

The period of mourning is for forty days. During this period rituals of fourth or fifteenth and fortieth days are held. In case of Gujjars who have settled in the plains, after the death of a family member no cooking is done in the house for three days and food for the family of the deceased is sent by neighbors or relatives. On the fourth day non-vegetarian food is prepared in the house and served to neighbors in the name of the deceased. On the tenth day, a stone is put



on the grave and pudding is distributed among the children of the neighborhood<sup>39</sup>. It is also customary to recite verses of *Saif-ul-Malook*, *Gulzar-i-Yousaf* or *Sei-harfian*, during the period of mourning in which the members of biradari come to mourn the death. After gap of forty the relatives and neighbors gather at the grave and offer prayers (*Fateha*).

If a death occurs during the 'migration' then the dead is buried along the route and the grave is marked by a heap of stones. Whenever the family members pass by the grave of the dead during seasonal migrations, they pay respect to the departed and light a lamp on the grave.



# Rituals and Ceremonies of Sikhs of Jammu

## 1. Sikhs of Jammu

Origin of Sikhs in Jammu can possibly be attributed to the visit of Sikh Guru Nanak Dev ji<sup>40</sup> who came to Jammu during his third Udasi in 1514<sup>41</sup>. As per literary sources Guru Nanak during his visit to Jammu, had stayed for three days at Panjvakhtar Shivalaya, near Residency Road and reportedly gave a discourse on Raj Dharma to local Raja Khokhar Dev<sup>42</sup>. The legend of Dogra Rajput Lashman Singh who later became famous as one of the greatest Sikh warriors known as Banda Bahadur or Banda Bairagi (27 October 1670–9 June 1716), is a testimony to the roots of Sikhism in Jammu and Kashmir which were further strengthened by the preachings of Baba Ram Dyal Bedi<sup>43</sup> of Dera Baba Nanak who had initiated many Jammu Hindus to Sikh Panth during the reign of Raja Ranjit Dev (r. circa 1725/1735--17825<sup>44</sup>). From the few families of Punjabi Khatri who migrated to Jammu during the 18th century for the purpose of trade and business to formation of Singh Sabha in 1891 in Jammu, the Sikhs had become an important component of society. Till the time of 1947 Partition, there was a high percentage of Sikhs in Poonch and Muzzafrabad areas of Jammu region<sup>45</sup>. The Sikh religion is against caste system but Sikhs of Jammu (barring untouchability) are divided into castes analogous to Hindus. During the course of the evolution of Sikh religion many sects also came up. In 1931 census, main sects of Sikhs recorded included *Akalis*, *Keshdharis*, *Namdharis*, *Nirankaris*, *Nirmala*, *Sehjdjhari*, *Sanatani* and other fringe groups<sup>46</sup>.

Other than castes and sects, Jammu Sikhs are also



known by hereditary professions, their home towns or by having belonged to a specific area. Few caste distinctions which are prevalent in Jammu Sikhs are: 1) *Khatri Sikhs* 2) *Jat Sikhs* 3) *Brahmin Sikhs* 4) *Rajput Sikhs* 5) *Labana Sikhs* 6) *Mahajan Sikhs* 7) *Bowriya Sikhs* 8) *Bhahtre Sikhs* 9) *Mahjabi Sikhs*. Categories of Sikhs who are known either by their having roots in a particular area or by their home towns include: 1) *Poonchi Sikhs* 2) *Mirpuri Sikhs* 3) *Muzafraabadi Sikhs* 3) *Kashmiri Sikhs* 5) *Ram Garhia Sikhs* etc. Division of Sikhs on basis of profession is as under: *Sunare Sikhs* (Goldsmiths), *Tathiar Sikhs* (Utensil makers) and *Sikligar Sikhs* (Iron Smiths) <sup>47</sup>.

Majority of Sikhs in Jammu—barring *Labana Sikhs*, few families of *Khatri* and *Mahajan Sikhs*—are refugees from the Pakistan occupied territory of J&K. *Poonchi* and *Muzafraabadi Sikhs* are mostly Brahmins and are further divided into sub-castes like *Sudans*, *Sassan*, *Dutta*, *Reen*, *Raina* etc. Intelligent and having knowledge of Sikh scriptures, *Poonchi Sikhs* are seen working as *Garanthis* and *Pracharaks* in Gurudwaras even across the Ravi in Punjab.

## 2. Ritual and Ceremonies

**Birth:** Guru Granth Sahib, the holy book of Sikhs is central to Sikh religious life from birth to death. When a child is born, his or her name is based on the first letter from the first full hymn on the page to which the holy book gets opened in the first instance. Eleven days after the birth of a child the *andar suchcha karna* (cleansing of the interior) ritual is held by calling the *Granthi* at home. He performs *paath* (recitation) of *panj-vanis* of *amrit bela* and the newly born is made to drink *amrit* (*amrit shakana*). It is followed by *ardhas* and



partaking of *prasad*. The child's first visit to Gurudwara, which would be the first occasion to pay reverence to the Guru Granth Sahib, is celebrated. Prayers and verses from the holy book are whispered in the child's ear.

***Dastar Bandi*:** The next important ceremony of a male child is *dastar bandi*—the first time when the turban is tied on the head of the child. This ceremony begins with *akhandpath* at home, or in a Gurudwara, and then some important religious personality ties the turban. Although Sikhs have no fixed 'confirmation' rites, or initiation ceremonies at the advancement from youth to adulthood, Sikhs can choose to undertake ritual initiation with the *Khande Di Pahul*—the baptism of the straight-sword. This simple rite is performed in a collective setting. A group of previously baptized Sikhs, usually five in number, leads the ceremony. They recite prayers while stirring an iron dish full of water with *khanda* (straight-sword), slowly sweetening the mixture with sugar wafers. Initiates listen to, reflect on, and participate in the prayers as well. At the culmination of the ceremony, all initiates take turns in drinking the *amrit* from edge of the dish, symbolizing their renunciation of social difference in the new fraternity of equals they have joined.

### 3. Marriage

All Sikhs groups are endogamous. A traditional Sikh wedding is described as Anand Karaj—a ceremony of bliss. It usually takes place during the day and is a family orientated, joyous and festive event. The Sikh wedding ceremony as compared to the Hindu is comparatively a simple affair. There are various rituals which are followed before and after



the wedding. *Shagun* or engagement is the first ceremony to mark the beginning of the wedding celebration. On this occasion the two families exchange precious gifts to conform the engagement. Among the other wedding rituals *Chunni*, *Mehandi*, *Chooda Ceremony*, *Godhi Chadhna*, *Milni* are some of the important ceremonies.

**The Anand Karaj** (rite of bliss) begins with the bride and groom meeting at Gurudwara with their wedding parties and respected members of community to conduct the ceremony. The bride, groom, and their parents stand in supplication in front of Guru Granth Sahib and ask for divine blessings for solemnizing the marriage. A special set of prayers, in four parts, is recited from the text of the Guru Granth Sahib. After each reading, the bride and groom circumambulate the throne on which the Guru Granth Sahib is placed—symbolizing the centrality of its teachings in their new life. The *kirtan* goes on through all four rounds—*lamvaan*, while the couple and congregation stand in prayer. Members of community may be asked to elucidate Sikh teachings for the instruction of the couple. Distribution of sweet *karah prashad*—*deg vartana*, marks the closing of all ceremonies with the sweetness of the Guru's gifts and congregational communion.

#### 4. Death

The after-death ceremonies in Sikhs of Jammu are followed as per the *Rehat Maryada* (Sikh code of conduct). At the Sikh's death-bed, friends and relatives recite *Sukhmani Sahib*<sup>48</sup> or simply recite *Waheguru*. At the time of death, wailing and lamentation is discouraged and public display of grief is kept to minimum.



Like Hindus, the dead are preferably cremated on the same day. The dead body in preparation for cremation is first given a bath and dressed up in clean clothes complete with *panj kakay*: *kesh* (uncut long hair), *kangha*, (small wooden comb), *kara*, (steel or iron bracelet), *kirpan* (short dagger) and *kachha* (undergarment). It is put on a wooden stretcher, then taken in a funeral procession to the cremation ground and placed on the pyre. At the time of cremation, after a few *shabads*, the *Kirtan Sohila*<sup>49</sup> is recited and finally *Ardas*, called *Antim Ardas* is offered. Then the fire is lit by the eldest son and other family members. On the third day the *phull chunana* ritual is held. Ashes and bones of the dead are collected and poured into the flowing water of the nearest river. From the fourth day till the seventh day after death, one hour of *katha*, *kirtan* followed by *ardas* is regularly held at the house where death has occurred. From eighth day *akhand path* starts which ends on the 10<sup>th</sup> day with *kirtan* of two hours and the *antim ardas*. The conclusion of this ceremony called *bhog* marks the end of the mourning period. Generally, all the relatives and friends of the family gather together for the *Bhog* ceremony. The Sikh belief is that after the spirit leaves the body, its fate gets determined by person's actions in life and divine grace and not the rites that loved ones perform after his death.



# Festivals of Jammu

## 1. Introduction

Jammu region which is home to all major religious communities like Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, Muslims and Christians can be called a mini India for its magnificent tradition of pluralism and composite culture.

Following respective calendars, all communities observe a parade of festivals throughout the year. Imbued with deep spiritual, religious or socio-cultural significance, each festival is a multifaceted celebration. Many a time, the day on which a particular festival is celebrated has a special astrological significance, and certain ritual practices on these days are supposed to yield manifold benefits. That is why most of these festivals are marked by certain observances such as fasting, particular *pujas*, abstinence, and series of celebrations including singing and dancing. Many festivals are associated with stories from the *Puranas*, legends and folk tales that give an insight into the deeper spiritual significance underlying the celebration.

Traditional festivals celebrated in Jammu fall in three broad categories: Religious, Seasonal and Commemorative. The religious festivals include *Dussehra*, *Diwali*, *Janmashtami*, *Shivaratri*, *Gurparbs* (*Guru Parvas*), *Ram Navami*, *Holi*, *Navaratri*, *Eid-ul-Zuha*, *Eid-ul-Fitr*, *Christmas*, *Buddha Purnima* and *Mahavir Jayanti* etc. The seasonal festivals celebrated irrespective of caste and creed, are *Baisakhi*, *Basant Panchami*, *Lohri*, *Holi* and so on. The commemorative festivals are associated with great religious and social personalities like *Baba Jitto*, *Guru*



*Padmasambhava (Hemis Festival of Ladakh), Gandhi Jayanti* and national festivals such Independence Day, Republic Day.

Most festivals are one-day long affairs but there are some which go on for two to three days. In Jammu, the festival days like Shivaratri, Baisakhi etc are also marked with holding of fairs where people come together in large numbers. Marked by a spirit of bonhomie and celebration, the festivals in rural and hilly areas invariably include *Chhinj* (wrestling matches).

## 2. Lohri

The festival of Lohri, which generally falls on the last day of *Poh* (*Paush*-10<sup>th</sup> month of Hindu calendar), mostly corresponding to 13<sup>th</sup> January, is an agrarian festival which marks the waning of winter and beginning of spring. A festival of rejoicing, dancing, Lohri is celebrated with great fervour and festivity throughout Jammu region as elsewhere in northern India. People exchange Lohri-wishes to celebrate the spirit of festivity.

One of the essential features of Lohri is the worship of fire which is lit on evening of the day of festival in every household. A *puja* is also held which involves *parikrama* around the fire and distribution of *prasad* which comprises five main items: *til* (sesame seed), *gajak* (a hardened bar of peanuts in jaggery or sugar syrup), *gur* (jaggery), *moongphali* (peanuts) and popcorn.

**Legend of Lohri:** The famous story associated with Lohri relates to Raja (in some versions he is mentioned as dacoit) of Pindi Bhattian, *Dulla Bhatti*, who was contemporary of



Akbar. *Dulla Bhatti* was known, respected and loved by the people of Punjab, as he used to rob the rich and help the poor. *Dulla Bhatti* was opposed to the abduction and selling of girls into slavery. He arranged marriages for them and also provided their dowries. He rescued many such girls from the kidnappers and then helped them in getting married. Owing to his anti-imperial and pro-farmer stance, *Bhatti* was sentenced to death by the Mughal king Akbar.

Since then this folk hero is remembered each year on Lohri and the traditional song is sung as a tribute to this folk hero. On day of Lohri, children in groups move from door to door and sing the *Dulla Bhatti* song: */Sunder Munderi hoi, Tera kaun Bechara!hoi, Dullah Bhattiwala!hoi, Dullah di dhi viyahi!hoi/-----*. The First Lohri of a newly-wed bride or a new-born male baby is considered extremely auspicious. In present times as reflection of the changing social realities, there is an emerging trend to celebrate the first Lohri of girl child also.

Lohri celebrations are never complete without music and dance, and feasting is invariably rounded off with a dance. Many days before the actual festival, enthusiastic groups of young children go to every house and shop singing songs and asking for money. People generally oblige them by giving them money, some eatables or even firewood as offering for the festival. In the late evening, logs of wood piled up for a bonfire in a busy *chowk* or a street corner are lit, and people indulge in singing songs and dancing as a prayer to *Agni* (Fire God) for abundant crops and prosperity associated with the harvest season.



### 3. Chajjas

The Vanished Heritage of Jammu: Before and during the decades of 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, Lohri celebrations were an integral part of everyone's childhood and also that of Jammu's unique popular culture. The most distinguishing feature of the festival was *Chajja*, an artistic presentation of a dancing peacock. Mounted on a bamboo mannequin covered with myriad shapes of *pattis*, flowers, made in materials like card board, colored glazed sheets, silks, crepe, satin, and decorated with pieces of mirrors, and any other exotic object that was considered appropriate-these *Chajjas* were showcases of every mohalla's individual pride.

In fact *Chhajja*-making was a statement of artistic and craft skills, an opportunity for local young men to hone and exhibit their aesthetic skills in handling materials and ideas. Young boys and men of every locality, under the guidance of senior persons would get engaged in the business of making a *Chhajja*, days in advance of the festival.

Since the best *Chhajja* was also awarded on the day of Lohri, there used to be fierce competition between mohallas like Panjtirthi, Pakki Dhakki, Kali Janni, Mastgarh. Every mohalla would prepare a decorative and colorful *Chajja* according to available skillful hands, funds and patronage. *Chhajjas* would be prepared very quietly at secret destinations, without divulging the competitors, or the designs. The groups vying with each other in the use of new colorful, decorative, extra shining materials would scout meticulously each city shop. There used to be extra vigil, lest the spies of the rival parties copy details of the design, materials as the contest to come out with new ideas was always on every year.

On the Lohri day, *Chhajjas*, carried by one or two



young men, were like flaming trails of peacocks' feathers on move and presented a spectacle for everyone. The riot of colors that moved along with group of dancers dancing in gay abundance accompanied by deafening beats of drums reverberated in the bazaars and localities of the city.

*Chajja* parties visited homes of relatives and friends especially those with a newly-wed couple or a newly-born male child. On the beats of accompanying *dhol* (large drum), the young group would play *dandaras* dance singing folk lyrics *Herni Bhai Herni* and collected offerings in cash and kind. Then the *Chajja* parties would head for their final destination to the royal palace of Hari Niwas where Maharani Tara Devi, wife of Maharaja Hari Singh, would give away sweets and cash awards to dancing groups.

Today *Chajjas* are part of history. But on Lohri day, one can still find groups of children carrying small triangular *Chajjas* singing Lohri songs and collecting gifts from people including cash which is later divided amongst the members of the groups.

#### 4. Makar Sangraand (Sankranti)

The day of *Makar Sangraand* falls on the following day of Lohri. Considered as an important sacred day throughout the country, this day celebrates sun's ascendancy into the northern hemisphere and its transition into the zodiacal sign of Capricorn (*Makar* in Hindi). It is believed to be the beginning of auspicious half-year. *Bhishama* in the Mahabharata waited for this auspicious period to breathe his last. *Makar Sangraand* is probably one of the few Hindu festivals, which is almost always celebrated on the same date every year i.e., January 14.



The Puranas say that on this day the Sun visits the house of his son *Shani* (Saturn), who is the *swami* (lord) of *Makar Rashi*. This day symbolizes the healthy relationship of father and son. It is the son who has the responsibility to carry forward his father's dream and the continuity of the family. In Jammu region, it is also called as sacred day of *khichadi* (rice and lintel broth). People give *daana* of *khichadi*. It is also customary to send gifts including *khichadi* to house of the in-laws of newly-married daughters. Day of *Makar Sangraand* also marks the beginning of *Magha Shnan*, the month long ritual of taking bath at sacred streams which culminates on *masseya* (new moon day). On this day, many festivals on the banks of rivers are also held in Jammu region.

## 5. Basant Panchami

Marking the change of season and heralding a period of color, mirth, gaiety, sweetness and fragrance, *Basant Panchami* is celebrated on the fifth day of the month of *Magha* (January-February). This day is especially dedicated to propitiate *Saraswati*, the goddess of learning, wisdom, fine arts and refinement. As a symbol of constant flow of wisdom, goddess *Saraswati* also represents inspiration and hope.

Before partition, in Jammu, the day of *Basant Panchami* was celebrated as *Basant*. "A *ratha yatra* of Lord Rama was taken out from the Raghunath temple. The grand procession was led by a posse of horse riders. The golden chariot of Raghunath ji was followed by elephants with golden *houdas*—a spectacle to behold. A special *Raj-darbar* was held in the evening to celebrate the *Basant Utsav* in which poets recited poems and singers sang compositions set in Raga



Basant. It was a shared festival of Jammuites; both Hindus as well as Muslims. The members of both communities used to put on identical clothes. The men wore yellow turbans while the women wore entirely yellow clothes. *Halwa* and sweet rice colored with saffron was prepared and distributed to near and dear ones<sup>50</sup>.

On the day of *Basant Panchami*, musicians and artists place their instruments in front of the image of goddess *Saraswati* and offer prayers. The goddess *Saraswati* is worshipped as *Veena Vadini*, wherein she is portrayed as an extremely fair and graceful figure playing *Veena* and sitting on a swan or peacock. Special poetical and musical evenings are held on this day and children initiated to learn alphabets.

## 6. Guru Ravi Das Jayanti

The *jayanti*—birthday, of Guru Ravidas is a national festival which is held to revere the 14<sup>th</sup> century saint who is worshipped as a *satguru* by his followers. Ravi Das belonged to the same period as Kabir. He was born the day of *Magha Purnima* in the year 1398 in a village near Varanasi. He is known to be a disciple of Ramanand. Ravi Das, a *chamar* (cobbler) by birth, taught monotheistic spirituality and a message of equality and emancipation from the caste system. Since 1950s, the birthday of Guru Ravi Das has been celebrated with a lot of zeal in Jammu. In the city of Jammu, on day of Ravi Das Jayanti, a number of tableaux made by Ravidasia communities from nearby villages and different parts of the city arrive at Guru Ravi Das temple, Krishna Nagar, opposite GGM Science College, Canal Road. Thereafter the tableaux are taken out in form of a *shobha yatra* (religious procession) which after passing through



the main bazaars of the city culminates at the temple only. *Satsang* and *kirtan* are also organized on the occasion.

## 7. Maha Shivaratri

Maha Shivaratri or Shiva Jayanti is celebrated on the thirteenth night of the waning moon of *Phaggan* (*Phalgun* 2<sup>nd</sup> month of Hindu calendar) (February –March). On this auspicious day Lord Shiva was married to goddess Parvati. The festival holds special importance for women as it is believed that Lord Shiva and goddess Parvati, his consort, would bestow marital bliss on women.

In Jammu and Kashmir where Shaivism is being practised since the hoary past, Maha Shivaratri holds a special significance. Devotees worship Lord Siva throughout the night and bathe the *Shiva Linga* with milk, curd, sugar, ghee and honey (*panchamrita*) amidst chanting of mantra *Om Namah Shivaye*. Devotees also take ritual baths at sacred rivers; observe fast and offer fruits, flowers and *bael* leaves (*Aegle Marmelos*) on *Shiva Lingas*.

In Jammu, most of the Hindus keep fast on this day. People offer worship to Lord Shiva in form of Shiva Linga. Till few decades ago the ladies from potter families used to go from house to house with Shiva Lingas made of clay, which were used by the householders to perform worship. On the day of Shivaratri, Shiva temples all over the region are tastefully decorated to wear a festive look. The Ranbireshwar temple, Jammu, dedicated to Lord Shiva, witnesses huge rush of devotees who start assembling right from early morning to seek divine blessings. The cave temple of Pir Kho, Panjvakhtar temple, also witness great rush of people. The occasion is also marked by a festival at Shiv Khori Cave



Shrine situated on a hillock in Ransoo village of Tehsil Reasi of the Udhampur District in Jammu region. People throng Shiva temples at famous pilgrimage centres Sudhamahadev, Purmandal, Uttarbaheni, Devak, Udhampur, where melas are also held on this holy day.

In Kishtwar, Shivaratri is known as *Shorath* and is celebrated continuously for three days. On the first day, people collect special herb *Anchhalay* and place it in the crevices of door and windows of houses to protect themselves from the bad eyes of witches, who as per local belief, fly over Kishtwar to celebrate Shivaratri at the remote spot of *Maya Chhiter* in *Kunrawara* area, where they dance, sing and prepare their own food. The second day is the fasting day. People chant *Om Namah Shivaye* and worship Shiva Linga during the entire night. On the third day *bhathoras* are cooked and shared with relatives and friends.

## 8. Holi

This festival of colors has more fun than any other Hindu festival. It is celebrated on the full moon day in Hindu month of *Phaggan* (February-March). It is more popular in North India. The festival celebrates the destruction of *Holika* and rescue of *Prahalada* (nephew of *Holika*) from fire by Lord Vishnu. It also marks the destruction of *Putana* by the infant Lord Krishna.

In Jammu, Holi is enjoyed by all communities. During the pre-partition days, Holi was a common festival of Hindus and Muslims in the region. They celebrated it with a spirit of bonhomie, amity and brotherhood. Holi is also the festival of forgiveness. On this day people forget old enmities and grievances, visit their friends and relatives and play Holi by



applying colours on each other.

Instead of the traditional washable, natural plant-derived colours, nowadays water-based commercial pigments are being increasingly used. Children enjoy Holi the most and love to throw water filled balloons on their targets. Young men and women in groups sing and dance to the beats of drums and *dholak*. Such groups are also offered sweets at the houses they visit. In Jammu, the old practice of partaking of *bhang* (hemp) has lost its popularity. Still some people do take *bhang* as part of Holi celebrations.

## 9. Ram Noumi (Ram Navami)

The birthday of Lord Rama—the seventh incarnation of Vishnu, who was born on the ninth day of the bright half of *Chaitra* (March-April) month in Ayodhya, in the *Treta Yug* or the second age—is celebrated all over the country as *Ram Noumi*. In Jammu region, the *Ram Noumi* festival which follows *ashtami* of *Naratas* (*Navaratras*), is celebrated with great devotion and enthusiasm. Dogra rulers who were Vaishnavites and worshippers of Lord Ram had built a number of Raghunath Temples in Jammu and Kashmir. Before 1947, *Ram Naumi* was almost an official festival and its celebrations were supported by the *sarkar* and the *Dharmarth Trust*. On *Ram Noumi day*, the temples are decorated and *Ram katha* is recited.

As per the old practice in Jammu city, *jhankis* (tableaux) showing Ram, Lakshman and Sita, and the episodes from Ramayana, are taken around the city in the shape of a procession. In the evening when tableaux culminate at the Raghunath Temple, *laddoos* made of pure *desi ghee* are distributed to devotees by management of the Dharmarth Trust.



## 10. Basoaa (Baisakhi) & Bishu

This annual festival is held on *sankranti* of *Baisakh* month (April). It is celebrated as beginning of Hindu New Year. The festival bears a great significance for Sikhs due to the fact that on the Baisakhi Day in year 1699, the 10<sup>th</sup> Sikh Guru, Guru Govind Singh had laid the foundation of the *Panth Khalsa* (the Order of the Pure Ones).

In Jammu region *Basoaa* festival is observed in almost all major towns including Jandrah, Udhampur, Ramnagar, Ramkot, Kanyala, confluence of Jhajjar and Tawi rivers, Dansal and Baggein. The day of *Basoaa* is full of colors and vibrancy. Gaily-dressed men and women move towards the fields to celebrate the occasion. The high point of *Basoaa* celebrations in villages is the performance of traditional folk dance *bhangra* by men. Generally, people after taking an early bath in ponds or rivers, visit temples or Gurudwaras to express gratitude to the Almighty for the bountiful harvest and pray for prosperity. Fairs at different places are also held on this day.

**Bishu:** The festival of *Basoaa* (Baishakhi) is called as *Bishu* by natives of Padar, Kishtawar. It is held on *Sang'aand* of Baisakh month in Padar and is celebrated as a day of ancestor worship. On this day, taking bath in the river, going to temple and doing *puja* is considered as auspicious. *Pakwaans* (crisp snacks), are also cooked in the name of ancestors and distributed amongst relatives, neighbors and friends. There is also a tradition to invite friends and known people for dinner. *Patru*, the local liquor, is also served in abundance.



## 11. Naga Panchami

Celebrated as a folk festival of great antiquity, *Naga Panchami*, the day of traditional snake worship, has special significance for Jammu region. Many native tribal races and communities link their origin to the Naga dynasty which is supposed to have ruled during the pre-historic period in north-eastern areas of Jammu region such as Bhadarwah etc. It is said that there was great enmity between Aryans and Nagas that lasted for many ages. One sage named *Aastika* succeeded in forming friendship between the two races and since then the day is celebrated as the *Naga Panchami* festival. While in rest of India, the worship of snakes is offered on the fifth day of bright half of Lunar month of *Soun* (*Shravan*-July/August), in Jammu region it is observed on *Rishi Panchami* falling in the month of *Bhadron* (*Bhadon*-August-September). The Mela Patt of Bhadarwah which culminates on *Rishi Panchami* with *Kaplash Yatra* perhaps is one of the remnants of those times.

On *Naga Panchami*, Dogras clean up their houses, and paint on walls the images of *Nagas* along with scorpions, centipedes, and other insects. In some families, the Nagas are painted on the back side of doors. *Kheer*, *puri*, *pranthas*, *mehri* and other dishes according to family tradition are prepared and *nagas* are worshipped along with *dalassi* (diluted butter milk). *Dalassi* and *navaida* is also offered on *Naga barmis* (ant hills) while praying for the well being of the children and other family members.

## 12. Rakkhadi (Raksha Bandhan)

On full moon day of the Hindu month of *Soun* (*Shravana*-July/August), the festival of *Rakkhdi* is celebrated all over



Jammu region. The festival is marked by a very simple ceremony in which women tie *rakkhadi* —which may be a colorful thread, a simple bracelet, or a decorative string — around the wrist of brother(s). The word *raksha* signifies protection, and *bandhan* is an association signifying an enduring sort of bond; and so, when a woman ties a *rakkhadi* around the wrist of her brother, she signifies her loving attachment to him. He, likewise, recognizes the special bonds between them, and by extending his wrist forward he in fact extends the hand of his protection over her. The thread-tying ceremony is sometimes preceded by the woman conducting *aarti* of her brother.

After the conclusion of the ceremony, the sister places some sweet in brother's mouth, and he also returns the gesture. It is customary for the brother to bestow a small gift upon his sister, generally in the form of a token sum of money.

### 13. Thougrein Da Brat (Janmashtami)

Popularly called as *Thougrein Da Brat* (Fast of *Thakur*-Lord Krishna) is the day on which Lord Krishna was born in Mathura. The fast and the festival are celebrated on *Ashtami* of *Krishna Paksha* of the *Soun* month, with its date being calculated every year. On the day of *Thougrein Da Brat*, people generally fast until midnight and thereafter worship the image or statue of Lord Krishna at home or temple. This is so because it is believed that Lord Krishna was born exactly at the stroke of midnight. Lord Krishna took birth in this world to rid it of Kansa, the wicked king of Mathura. In Jammu city during the pre-Independence period, *Janmashtami* was celebrated with great pomp and show.



The religious minded Dogra kings being worshippers of Lord Vishnu and his various incarnations, showed great enthusiasm in celebrating religious festivals which were more or less treated as official functions.

In continuation of the old tradition, on day of *Janmashtami*, tableaux of different episodes from Shri Krishna's life are taken in a procession. They culminate at Raghunath Mandir, where *sund-panjiri* is distributed to one and all by the Dharmarth Trust. At present times the performances by Ras Lila parties from Mathura etc are also organized by religious and social organizations.

Idols of Lord Krishna in homes and temples are cleaned and decked up in new clothes and ornaments. Temples wear a festive look, where people gather by midnight to celebrate the Lord's birth. Some interesting practices throw light on the myriad ways *Janmashtami* is observed by different communities of Jammu. Some people observe complete abstinence till midnight (the rise of *Rohini nakshatra* when Lord Krishna was born), and break day-long fast only after midnight by taking *phalahar* (fruit-based meal). In some families there is no fasting but food is prepared in special ways: some eat food which has been cooked a day earlier; some do not light the hearths, some cook in the dark and so on.

#### 14. Dassehra (Dussehra)

The Hindi word *Dussehra* is derived from Sanskrit word *Dasha Hara*, which means destroyer of evil or the ten-headed evil Ravana. *Dassehra* marks the culmination of *Naraate*, devotional nine nights of Maa Durga. *Dassehra* is also popularly known as *Vijayadashmi*.



This festival symbolizes victory of good over evil. *Lord Rama* is believed to have killed *Ravana* on this day. Many people believe that *Maa Durga* slayed the demon *Mahishasura* on this day. Usually people celebrate *Dassehra* by burning the effigies of *Ravana*, *Kumbhakarna* and *Meghanath*.

In Jammu region *Dassehra* festivals are held in all major cities and towns. This day also marks the culmination of nine-day theatrical performances of *Ramlila* by local Ram Lila clubs. In the city of Jammu and other major towns of the region, on *Dassehra day*, chariots carrying Ram, Sita and *Lakshmana* pass through the crowds, and by sunset, the processions reach their respective *Dassehra* grounds where effigies of *Ravana*, *Kumbhakarna* and *Megahnath* are already installed. The persons enacting *Rama* and *Lakshmana*, shoot arrows to burn the effigies one by one. In Jammu there is a tradition of carrying home the burnt bamboo-armature-sticks of the effigies as it is believed that the presence of such a stick in one's home wards off thieves.

### 15. Deyali (Diwali)

It is the 'festival of lights' celebrated on the new moon day that marks the end of *Assoo* (*Ashwin*-October) and beginning of *Kattak* (November) month. One of the biggest festivals of Hindus, it is associated with Lord Rama's return to Ayodhya after 14 years of exile. People of Ayodhya celebrated the return of Lord Rama by lighting rows of lights in and around their houses and shops and other buildings.

In Jammu, like in the rest of the country, *Deyali* has ritualistic significance for the business people who start their new-year and open new account books on this day. Shops are cleaned up and decorated and goddess *Maha Lakshmi* is



worshipped and her *yantra* (ritual diagram) is hung on the walls. Common folks also worship goddess *Lakshami*.

Two days before *Deyali*, *Dhan-Traousati* or *Dhan Teras* is celebrated. On this day people buy new utensils and use these on the occasion of *Lakshmi puja*. On this auspicious occasion, houses are cleaned up, whitewashed and interiors decorated. There is tradition to do *deepmala*-lighting rows of lamps, on parapets and walls of the houses and business establishments. On the day of *Deyali* people wear new clothes, exchange gifts, burst firecrackers, colourful sparklers, and have festive meals. Some people also gamble on this day.

## 16. Kanchowth

This festival is celebrated in most villages of Bhaderwah and Kishtwar. It is much like the festival of *Kareya Chouth* (*Karwa Chouth*), which is celebrated all over India. The festival of *Kanchouth* which falls on day of *Gouri Teej* (3<sup>rd</sup> day of *Magh*, is commemorated as marriage anniversary of Lord Shiva and goddess Parvati) and married women pray for the long life of their husbands and family members by keeping fast on this day and *Naga* and *Gauri puja*

After taking bath, women folk dress up in their best *sari* or *makhmal* dress or their wedding dress and with golden ornaments, gather at a nearby water body-*bowli* (spring) or village temple, where they perform *puja* in a group and then sing *Ghurai* and dance.

Women bow down to touch each other's feet in order to get blessings from each other for the long life of their husbands. This is called *Thel* (respect) in the local language. Though the festival is of one day, yet the festivity remains for three



days. During these three days, ladies go to the neighborhood, to relatives to offer *thel* to one and all irrespective of their caste, creed, age, sex or religion to take their blessings. They even touch the feet of their children who in return say *Sada Suhagan Bhoth* (Long live your husband).

The ladies are supposed to take food in every house they visit. During these three days the kitchens in the houses are managed by husbands<sup>51</sup>.

## 17. Dharamdees

*Dharamdees* is a major festival of Bhadarwah where agricultural activities, after the melting of snow, begin with blessings of *Naga devta* who is also considered as *kul devta* (family deity). This festival takes place generally on first day of *Chait* month, which also marks the beginning of New Year in Bhadarwah.

People, irrespective of caste and creed bring their bullocks to the nearby field, where the elder male of the family performs *puja* by putting a tilak on their foreheads, offer *gur* and then plough the land. Women dig the land with a hand held ploughing tool called *bangori*.

In the preceding night of the *Dharamdees* festival, a large *thali* (platter) is prepared. It usually contains rice, coins, gold, walnut, *elaichi* (cardamom), *supari* (areca/betel nut), *gur*, flowers, and a picture of *Basak Naga* is also put in the *thali* and is called *kamarth* with a pot in which a flower and a citrus fruit called *kimb* is kept and is placed at the feet of the family deity<sup>52</sup>. Next day, before dawn, someone from the family goes to the nearby *baoli* (spring) to fetch fresh water in the pot kept in the *thali*. The pot is then worshipped by offering flowers on the water source and then the pot filled



with water is brought home. The entire process is called *Pungrha*. It is believed that one who fetches the water is blessed by God almighty. The pot of fresh water is then placed near the *kamrath* and is taken by the same person, who has performed *Pungrha*, to the bed of every member and everyone has to look in the *thali* (*darshan*) on waking up and eat *gur* from it<sup>53</sup>. On the day of *Dharamdees* people avoid going to each other's house believing that their going there would cast good or bad effect on the family for the whole year. However if a *shresht purusha*—a happy, rich, healthy, calm and cool person—visits the house (*laangh*), it is considered lucky.

## 18. Dhundu Kundu

This festival is also celebrated in winters in the month of January-February in the hilly villages of Bhadarwah. A day before the festival, local boys go out to the forest to collect special wooden sticks to build *Khajol*, which is prepared by creating a ring of wooden stick into which are tightly fitted, long small and thin wooden pieces called *Tenturu*. This ring is connected tightly to another flexible wooden stick. The combination is called *Khajol*. When the sun sets and it becomes dark, all the family members gather on their roof tops and kids burn the ring end of *Khajol* and start rotating it over head shouting *Khajol.....Khajol.....*

The whole village looks as if on fire that night and every person tries to shout louder than his neighbor's voice. It becomes a kind of competition among the kids. Elders of all the families take *deolies*—a bunch of small burnt wooden pieces tied together to a nearby field and place them side by side at the edge. This is done to offer prayers to their



ancestors. On the early morning of next day *Dhundu Kundu* is celebrated in each house. The family ladies burn *Dhundu Kundu* and kids go from house to house singing folk songs, to collect what is called in the local language as *poi*.

## 19. Charjik

Held on *Purnima* of month of *Pou*, *Charjik* seems to commemorate mythical battle between *Devas* and *Rakshas*, in which *Devas* had won. During the night, people light lamps in their homes. A folk play *Rakas* is also performed in the night which is watched by the entire community.

**19.2. Chew:** A folk festival of Padar, it is celebrated on 25th of month of *Haad*. On this day *naga* worship is performed to ensure their continuing protection and blessing.

**19.3. Dakkh Niyaz:** The word is a colloquial form of Sanskrit word *Dakshinayana* (Summer Solstice). Celebrated in Puhaal area of Padar, it is held on *Sangraand* (first day) of *Haad* (June– July). It's a part of *Dakshinayana* ritual which marks the start of longer nights and shorter days. On this festival, people depart with cattle for meadows in the higher reaches. Before taking leave of their families, relatives and friends, for a sojourn that lasts from three to four months, the animal grazers assemble for a festive celebration in which dance and music is also played. Men and women dance the *Khadjath* dance. A number of dishes are also prepared and partaken on the occasion.

**19.4. Jagara/Jakru:** Known by names such as *Jagara/Jakru/Jagru*, in Padari, this festival is held in one and other form in most of the Western Himalayan region as an exhibition of the



power of *lok devtas*. Organized in the name of each of such deities scattered in villages of Padar, the site of *Jagara* turns into a festive space which presents a fair like atmosphere. This powerful folk religious practice of Padar is also called as *Puhaali* and is celebrated in a month long festive celebration from 18<sup>th</sup> *Haad* till 18<sup>th</sup> *Soun/Saawan*. During this entire month *Jatrs* are held in honour of various local deities on designated dates in different villages of Padar.

## 20. Mithiyang

Celebrated to herald the onset of the new-year and spring season, this festival in local Padari language is called *Jan Chhontar*. Held on *Shukula Paksha* (bright half of the moon) *E/Kadashi* (the sacred day, occurring twice a month in the Hindu calendar) of *Phaggan* (February-early March), it marks the starting of farming activities after a severe winter in the area. According to some writers the festival seems to be a vestige of some pre-Vedic practice.

On this day before start of farming operation formally, a *puja* of good earth is held with *ghee*, honey, clean water, branches of a tree, cow dung and the first spring flower locally called as *Tilanchh*.

On this day members of different tribes also worship their family deities and pray for a good crop. The farmers go to their fields along with their bulls garlanded with flowers and worship the animals. The elder of the family puts a tilak of good earth and is the first to plough the field.

On this occasion a number of fairs is also held in different pockets of Padar where *pujaris* of various *devtas* along with people dressed in traditional dress, arrive dancing to the rhythm of *dhols*, *nagare*, bells, *shankha*. The *pujaris* light



up the herb, *Sangal*, as incense which fills the surroundings with its fragrance. People also dance in groups.

## 21. Kann Choti

The festival of *Kann Choti* is celebrated on the auspicious day of *Gauri Tritiya*. During this four-day long festival local people make idols of Shiva and Parvati in wheat flour and worship them. According to the legend popular here, the marriage of Shiva and Parvati was supposed to be held on this day.

**21.1. Nagoi:** The festival marking the opening of doors of Chandi Mata shrine at Chashoti, in Padar, is popularly called as *Nagoi* or *Nagoah*. People gather in the courtyard of the temple and sing *bhajans* in praise of the Mata Chandi. The lyrics of the *bhajan* chanted on the occasion are *Hina nagaoi Taiohaar aayi ho / Kholo Mata Ra Dwar Ho/*.

**21.2. Lost Ritualistic practices:** While Jagru in the Himalayan belt seems a new edition of an old ritual practice, many aboriginal practices are now almost extinct. These include *Phulchai* and *Trechol Dakairni*. These rituals were related to putting flags for the dead, shouting obscene expressions to ward off *Van-devis*, forest spirits, and to make *Nag devtas* to go to sleep.

## 22. Buddhist Festivals

Paddar in Kishtwar district is the only place in Jammu region where about 7000 Buddhists live. The Buddhists called as *Bhots*, are settled in 22 villages such as Hango, Haloti, Sancham, Lussani, Kabban and Tun villages of



Bhot Nala and Gandhari Nala of Paddar. These Bhots have migrated from Zanskar via Umasi La and settled in the above mentioned villages.

**22.1. Losar:** *Losar*, originally a festival of Tibet, marks the beginning of New Year. It is celebrated by all Buddhist communities spread across the Tran-Himlayas, including Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir.

*Losar* is the most elaborate of all the socio-religious events, and interestingly, the rites and rituals are a mixture of Buddhist and the pre-Buddhist Bon religious practices. Preparations start by the end of the harvest period when people start stocking provisions, sheep and goats for the customary feasts as well as grain for brewing *Chang* (a local barley beer). New clothes and jewelry are kept ready for the occasion. The festivities start on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of the 10<sup>th</sup> month, with the illumination of buildings and shrines. Sheep and goats earmarked for the occasion are ritually slaughtered to begin the series of evening feasts for all relatives by rotation.

The New Year Day starts with the offering of votives and greetings to various gods, elders, relatives and friends. Afterwards, the elders await the customary visitors who come to greet the family with presents and *khatak* (ceremonial scarf). The younger members go out to visit other families. Images of ibex and other auspicious symbols are put on the door, walls of the kitchen etc. The ibex is a symbol of fertility and is believed to bring prosperity. Small images of ibex moulded from dough are arranged on kitchen shelves to add to the good luck. In the evening, the *Metho* ceremony takes place. The streets of villages get lit up as processions bearing



flaming torches pass through with the people chanting slogans to chase out evil spirits and hungry ghosts—the result of bad Karma. Whirling torches create a fantastic display of fire and light. At the end of it all, the torches are thrown outside the village to bid farewell to the passing year and to welcome the new one. Now, with Himalayan Buddhist Cultural Society (HBCS) building a huge Gompha and Buddhist Centre at Gulabgarh, Padar, *Losar* is also celebrated at main centre of the area. The Gompa and the Buddhist centre were inaugurated by Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama on 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2010.

**22.2. *Buddha Purnima*:** It is a Buddhist festival that marks Gautama Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death. It falls on the day of the full moon in May every year. It is celebrated by Buddhist communities of Paddar, Kishtwar, Buddhist families settled in Jammu, and the neo-Buddhists in Jammu. The day is declared as a national holiday. People throng Gumpas and spend the day worshipping the Buddha and giving charity to Lamas.

**22.3. *Nuenain*:** This three-day festival is held in month of *Phaggan*. *Bhots* (Buddhists) fast on this day and keep *mounbrat*, i.e., vow of silence, and chant mantras in heart. The Gompas also remain veiled in silence.

## 23. Festivals of Gaddis

Along with other races of the region, Gaddis form an important component of the social fabric of Jammu region. The Gaddis of Jammu believe that they have migrated from Bharmour, their home land in Chamba area of Himachal



Pradesh<sup>54</sup>.

Gaddis are a semi-agricultural tribe and own large flocks of sheep and goats, which are their main source of wealth. They are not nomadic in the strict sense since they have villages where they reside, however they do make their way to higher pastures in summer season with their flocks and in winters return to low hills bordering on the plains. They are very hard working and keep concern with their job only. Gaddi women are bright and cheerful. Gaddis are very firm with their beliefs and faiths<sup>55</sup>.

However with changing times and owing to the onset of militancy which has disrupted age-old seasonal migrations, Gaddis are largely depending upon agriculture as a means of livelihood. Some of them are working as labourers and few of them have set up small businesses. A small number of Gaddis have also got employed in government jobs<sup>56</sup>. Gaddis are increasingly setting up permanent houses. Examples of such Gaddi houses can be seen in villages of Kansar, Shupiyal, and Kud<sup>57</sup>. Despite pressures of urbanization, Gaddis are still firmly entrenched in their beliefs and customs, which are symbols of their distinct identity.

**Sair:** The festival of Sair is celebrated with great enthusiasm on first day of *Assu* (Sept-Oct) month. Meat is eaten on this day. Some Gaddis take *Sur* (homemade beer), while *Babroos* (fried bread) of wheat flour are eaten with a variety of vegetables. People go to their relatives, especially married daughters visit their parents. This day is considered as the end of rainy season. New clothes are purchased on this occasion.

**Patroru Sagraand:** *Patroru Sagraand* is celebrated on first



day of *Bhaadon* (August-September) month. On the eve of the day *Kachalu* (Taro) leaves rolled with *Besan* (black gram dal flour) are fried in oil. *Babroos* are also eaten on this day. **Shivaratri:** Associated with Lord Shiva, *Shivaratri* is the favorite festival of Gaddis. It is celebrated in the month of *Phaggan* (Feb-March). On this day some Gaddis keep fast and cereals are not taken by many persons. In addition to these festivals, *Lohri*, *Holi*, *Bishu*, *Dassehra* and *Janamashtmi* festivals are also celebrated in the same manner as do other communities.

## 24. Muslim Festivals

Various historical references point out that encouraged by peaceful conditions prevailing during the long rule of Raja Ranjit Dev, a large number of Muslims from neighboring states settled in Jammu. During the reign of Ranjit Dev, not only few Muslim localities came up but mosques also were constructed for the devout Muslims in Jammu city. Gulab Singh, who was crowned as Raja of Jammu in 1820's by Ranjit Singh, had in a friendly gesture allowed local Muslims to the call of *Azaan* (the call for prayers from a mosque), while the same was not permitted to Muslim subjects of the Sikh empire.

After 1846, with the formation of modern state of Jammu and Kashmir a large number of Jammu Muslims were placed in high administrative positions. This trend was continued by later day Dogra rulers till 1947 when formation of Pakistan gravely affected the lives of Muslims in Jammu and elsewhere in India.

In the early decades of 20th century, during the holy month of Ramzan, an expert trumpeter would go to the



roof of Mastgarh mosque, Jammu, which had been built on an elevation and blow the trumpet loud. It could be heard for miles. "For Eid, Maharaja Hari Singh would go to the mosque where the biggest congregation offered prayers. He would take the Nawab of Palampur along to the mosque, where the Nawab would join the Muslims of Jammu in prayer. Hari Singh would stand respectfully for two hours while prayers were being offered.... When the Eid prayers were over the Maharaja would give the Imam an expensive *pashmina* robe and cash grant<sup>58</sup>.

It is a recorded fact that the population of Muslims in Jammu increased during Dogra rule (roughly 1820-1947) which speaks a lot about freedom of religion that Muslims enjoyed in the State. The number of *Shias* also increased in some localities in the city and a few villages around Jammu came to be inhabited by them exclusively.

In the light of secular character that marks the socio-cultural life of Jammu, a number of festivals and fairs like Baisakhi, Dussehra are attended by Hindus and Muslims alike. The Muslims on the other hand celebrate their festivals and sacred days with great devotion, enthusiasm and zeal.

**25. 1. *Eid ul Fitr*:** *Eid* is an Arabic word meaning 'festivity', while 'Fitr' means 'breaking the fast'. It is celebrated after the long fasting month of Ramadan<sup>59</sup>. It is celebrated first by offering alms to the poor and then by joining prayer at the mosque.

**25.2. *Eid-ul-Zuha or Bakr-Id*:** The Muslim festival of sacrifice is one of the most important Muslim festivals in Jammu and Kashmir as well as the country. *Id-ul-Adha*



in Arabic and *Bakr Eid* in India, is celebrated with great enthusiasm and fervor from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> day in the month of *Dhul Hijjah* (the twelfth month of Islamic calendar). On this day Muslims sacrifice goats/sheep to commemorate the sacrifice of Prophet Ibrahim, who willingly agreed to sacrifice his son at the command of God.

Prophet Ibrahim was about to sacrifice his son when it was revealed to him that it was a test of his faith and should sacrifice a ram instead. The festival also concurs with the *Hajj* pilgrimage of Mecca. On this day Muslims wear new clothes and attend prayer meetings in mosques and then sacrifice goat or sheep and share the meat with family members, neighbors and the poor. Muslims wish each other with *Eid Mubarak* and visit relatives and friends. Special dishes are prepared and served on the occasion and gifts are also exchanged on this auspicious day.

## 26. Days of Special Religious significance for Shia Muslims

The main days of special significance of Shias are of two types—days of festivity and rejoicing and days of mourning. The days of festivity and rejoicing are *Eid-ul-Fitr*, *Eid-ul-Zuha*, *Eid-e-Gadeer*, *Nawroz* and *Eid-ul-Milad*.

Besides, birthdays of Imams are also celebrated as rejoicing days. *Eid-ul-Fitr* and *Eid-ul-Zuha* are celebrated. *Eid-e-Gadeer* and *Nawroz* are of special importance for Shias. These two days are celebrated in loving memory of the nomination of Hazarat-i-Ali as the successor of the Prophet of Islam. The Muharram is the first month of Islamic calendar associated with the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the grandson of Prophet of Islam<sup>60</sup>.



**26.1 Muharram:** *Muharram*, the first month of the Islamic calendar is also one of the four sacred months. The 10<sup>th</sup> day of Muharram is the *Day of Ashura*. For the Shia Muslims this day marks the *Mourning of Muharram*, which is a set of rituals associated with the events marking the *Battle of Karbala*, in which Imam Hussein Ibn Ali, grandson of Prophet Mohammad was killed along with other family members.

There is an old tradition of *Muharram* celebrations by Jammu Shia Muslims. Jammu city's annual *Muharram* tableau (*Tajia*) was known for its beauty. Hindus as well as Muslims would stand on either side of the road when the procession went through the town. People of both communities would set up stalls (booths) at which sherbet and drinking water would be served free to the Shiites<sup>61</sup>. From the concentration of Shia population around Mohalla Khatikaan, the Shias are now also residing in new colonies like New Plot, Lakkar Mandi, Janipur. Traditionally the *Tajia* procession on the day of Muharram starts from Pir Mittha. The *Tajias* along with *Alams* (flags taken out on the occasion of *Muharram* procession) from other areas of Jammu like Roopnagar also assemble here.

## 28. Sikh Festivals

**Gurparbs:** Gurparbs (short form of Hindi Guruparvas) are the birth anniversaries of the 10 Sikh gurus who were responsible for shaping the beliefs of Sikhs. Sikhs consider these days as holy days, Gurparbs are occasions for celebrations and prayer among Sikhs. Ten Sikh Gurus are; Nanak Dev, Angad Dev, Amar Das, Ram Das, Arjan Dev, Har Gobind, Har Rai, Har Krishan, Tegh Bahadur and



Gobind Singh. The celebrations are generally similar for all Gurparbs; only the hymns are different.

***Prakash Utsav***: The birthday of Guru Nanak Dev ji, the founder of Sikhism, celebrated on *Kartik Poornima*, (which usually falls in month of November) is called as *Prakash Utsav*. Like Sikh communities in other parts of country and abroad, it is celebrated with great religious fervour and devotion by Sikhs and also Hindus across the Jammu region. The festival's celebrations start with the *Prabhat Pheris*<sup>62</sup>, which witnesses heavy rush as compared to other days. Generally two days before the festival *Akhand Path* is held in Gurudwaras. One day before the *Prakash Utsav*, a procession referred to as *Nagarkirtan* is taken out. This procession is led by the *Panj Pyaras* (Five Beloved Ones) who head the procession carrying the *Nishan Sahib* (Sikh flag), and Guru Granth Sahib in a *Palki* (Palanquin). They are followed by teams of singers and devotees singing hymns. The other highlights of the *Nagarkirtan* are teams of *Gatka* players who display their swordsmanship. The passage of the procession is covered with banners and gates decorated with flags and flowers. On the day of *Prakash Utsav*, the devotees started visiting the Gurudwaras from early morning where they performed worship and get involved in the service (*seva*). The youngsters and children who show high degree of enthusiasm and dedication get involved in cleaning the Gurudwara floors, cooking and distributing *Langar*, besides involving themselves in other activities. The children, women and youngsters take part in the religious procession with great devotion amid chanting of religious slogans and singing hymns, thus adding religious fervour to



the celebrations.

In Jammu, the main function is held at Gurudwara Maharani Chand Kour near Gummat, where *Akhand Path* is followed by *Shabad Kirtan*. The devotees are also served *langer* on the occasion. The celebrations of Gurburab at all Gurudwaras culminate with the performance of *Antim Ardas* and *Bhog* in late evening, followed by distribution of *prasad* among the devotees. At night, the Sikh families visit the houses of their relatives and neighbours and exchange greetings and gifts. The Sikh community members also illuminate their homes, while the youngsters enjoy fireworks. Similar celebrations are held in other Gurudwaras of Jammu which are beautifully decorated to mark the occasion. *Ragis* and religious preachers highlight various facets of Guru Nanak Dev Ji's life and his teachings.

**Baisakhi:** Sikhs of Jammu, like Sikhs elsewhere celebrate Baisakhi as the day when tenth Guru Gobind Singhji formed the Khalsa sect in 1699. The Gurudwaras are full of people who come to listen to *Kirtans*, offer prayers and feast on the *parsad* from the common Kitchen (*Langer*).

## 29. Buddhist Festivals

While Buddhist communities of Jammu region in Paddar, Kishtwar, follow the calendar of festivals as practiced in contiguous Ladakh, the Ladakhi Buddhist families and students settled or stationed in Jammu and the new-Buddhist community in Jammu, celebrate *Buddha Purnima*. This Buddhist festival that marks Gautama Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death, falls on the day of the full moon in May. The day is declared as a national holiday. People throng



Gumpas, and spend the day worshipping the Buddha and giving charity to Lamas (*for details see festivals of Padar*).

### 30. Christian Festivals

A large section of native Christians of Jammu have a colonial history and are a minority.

**Christmas:** Christmas is an annual commemoration of the birth of Jesus Christ on 25 December. Christmas is a universal festival and according to the Christ's teachings has a special significance for its unity in diversity, worldwide. On Christmas, churches in Jammu city and other parts of the region, are beautifully decorated. Members of local Christian community- men, women, children, dress up in new and colorful clothes and go in large numbers to attend the special service held on this day.

On a day ahead of Christmas, the Christian community of Jammu takes out a procession which starts from Shaheedi Chowk. After passing through Raghunaht Bazaar, Purani Mandi, Kachi Chowni and Rajinder Bazaar it culminates at Shaheedi Chowk.

The main attraction of these processions which are led by Chiors, are the *jhankis* (tableaus) taken out by different churches of Jammu city and adjoining areas. These *jhankis* depict scenes from the life of Christ and his works and precious teachings on love, harmony, peace and brotherhood. Some Christian devotees dress up as Santa Claus to represent the message of giving joy to others.

A Chariot with King Herod, representing danger to the life of Infant Christ, and soldiers of Roman Army is a special attraction in the procession. Priests of the churches of Jammu



region also participate in the procession along with church members.

During Christmas it is a common sight to see Santa Claus dresses being displayed by Shopkeepers. In recent years not only the Christians but members of other communities, especially children, have also started celebrating the holy day.

**Lent and Holy Week:** Christians keep 40 days of fasting and abstinence from meat for 40 days preceding the Holy Week—Holy Thursday, Good Friday (day of mourning because Jesus Christ was crucified on this day) and Easter Sunday (a festive day, marked by feasting and rejoicing to commemorate the Resurrection of Christ).

On Holy Thursday Christ established the Holy Eucharist<sup>63</sup>—the main part of the mass (*puja*) celebrated every day of the year the world over. The mass is a *param puja*—the Son of God sacrificing himself to redeem mankind. On Good Friday Christ is crucified by Roman Law at the insistence of Jewish religious leaders. On the third day, Easter, he rises from grave and tells his followers to receive the Holy Spirit and take the message of love and forgiveness to all parts of the world.

Christians of Jammu take out processions on the beginning of the Holy Week. Sunday is the day to celebrate the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, exactly one week before his Resurrection. Palm Sunday marks the start of what is often called 'Passion Week', the final seven days of Jesus' earthly ministry. Christians of Jammu also celebrate the new-year with lot of fervor and enthusiasm.



### 31. Pahbra (Jain) Festivals

**31.1. *Pahbras of Jammu:*** The miniscule community of *Pahbras* (Jains) which forms an important part of Jammu's multi-cultural and multi religious mosaic are members of the ancient merchant community from the Punjab region who may have originated from the *Pahbra* town. *Pahbras* are mainly followers of Jainism but some are also Muslims. The *Pahbras* of Jammu trace their origin to a few trading families hailing from Sialkot and from Bikaner, Rajasthan, who had come to Jammu during the time of Dogra Raja Gulab Singh for the purpose of business. In last one hundred and fifty years, apart from holding important positions like Dewans and in-charge of mint, royal assessors of precious stones, etc., *Pahbras* have been mostly working as goldsmiths and in various *minyaari* (general grocery) businesses. Today some *Pahbras* hold important position in state administration and judiciary.

An inalienable part of Jammu's civil society, a bazaar in the old city is also named after the community as Pahbra Bazaar. There are approximately 600 families of *Pahbras* in Jammu, out of which 595 belong to the Shvetambra sect (white-clad) and five families are of the Digambara sect (Sky-clad)<sup>9</sup>. Out of the 595 families of Svetambaras, 550 are Sthanakvasis while 45 families are Mandirvsasis. Today, only the old timers in Jammu use the expression Pahbra while the new generation is increasing using the term Jain, so much so that the old Pahbra Bazaar is also being called as Jain Bazaar. *Pahbras* were traditionally settled in and around Jain bazaar area of the old city, but for the last few decades many Jain families have moved out of the old city and settled in an area in Talab Tillo which is called Jain Nagar.



Amongst the religious places of Jains, the Upashray is a place or abode where the Jain Sadhus and Sadhvis stay or reside in separate apartments and perform worship. Jain men approach Sadhus; and women approach Sadhvis and seek their guidance for their spiritual endeavors.

In Jammu city the Upashray at Jain Bazaar is more than one hundred years old. The biggest Upashray, at Rani Talab, near Jain School, is called Nek Chand Memorial Hall while the Jain Nagar Upashray, is a recent one. There are also few Jain temples in Jammu where idols of Jain Tirthankras are worshipped by Jain laity. The oldest Mahavira temple of the Jammu city, which is again more than a hundred years old, is located at Fattu Chowgan. The other temple at Jain Nagar is dedicated to Kalyan Parshavnath. While the latest Jain temple which is about to be completed at Bahu Plaza, is dedicated to Nageshwara Parshavnath. The only known place of worship of Digambara sect in Jammu, and called as Shri 1008 Shantinath Jin Chaitalya, is located at the house of Rai Bahadur Ramji Das, Sialkot Wale at Tehsil Road, Jammu.

## 32. Jain Festivals

Like other communities of Jammu, the Jains have got a number of festivals during the year. Some of these are specially connected with the anniversaries of the births and deaths of the Tirthankras while others are special sacred days.

**32.1. Paryushana Parva:** The important Jain festival, Paryushan Parva, is organized every year in the month Bhadrapad from the 5th day to 14th day of the bright



fortnight. This festival, also called as Dash Lakshan Parva, is the festival of self-purification through fasting and other ascetic practices. Jain men, women and children as well as monks and nuns undertake fasts with varying strictness. Svetambaras observe the festival over a period of eight days and Digambaras celebrate Dash-Lakshana Parva for ten days. During Paryushana, there are regular sermons and ceremonies in the temples and chapters from Tattvartha Sutra, are read out to the audience. On the last day, members of Jain community members greet each other and ask forgiveness (*Ksmayachna*) for any pain that might have been caused knowingly or unknowingly by any of their actions during the past year. For Svetambaras, the final day of Paryushan is Samvastsari Pratikraman, the annual confession. The ritual of asking forgiveness from the teacher is widened in scope to include family and friends and, finally, all living beings. The culmination of confession is receiving forgiveness from all living beings and also granting forgiveness to all. This ritual of forgiveness is sometimes called the rite of 'universal friendship'.

### 33. Mahavir Jayanti

This festival associated with Lord Mahavira's birthday is marked with celebrations in all Jain temples of Jammu. Vyakhan or religious lectures are given by Munis (Jaina monks). Processions are taken out, meetings are held and the message of Mahavira is explained to all.

**33.2. Siddhachakra:** Another important religious ceremony known as *Siddhichakra* worship is celebrated by Jains twice a year in the months of *Ashwin* and *Chaitra*, each lasting for



9 days from the 7th to the 15th of the full moon.

The *Siddhachakra Yantra* is considered the most auspicious mystical diagram in the Jain religion. *Siddha* means liberated soul and 'chakra' means freedom from karmic bondages. *Yantra* means a mystical diagram. The rationale behind performing this *puja* is usually either marital felicity or physical health. The story of *Siddhachakra* is connected with King Shripal and Queen Mayanasundari. According to the Jain tradition, they lived at the time of the 20<sup>th</sup> Tirthankar *Munisvarat Swami*, who lived approximately 1.1 million years ago. As the story goes, *King Shripal* was suffering from leprosy and married *Mayanasundari* who took him, together with 700 lepers, to a monk named *Munichandra* for the cure. He instructed them for the cure on how to perform the *Siddhachakra Mahapuja* which worked! The *Yantra* depicts the whole Jain Dharma, the principle nine elements (*Nav Pad*) and the protective deities. The main section is in the form of an auspicious pitcher (*kalash*). It has two main components: the first is the core, *Nav Pad*, which consists of circles 1 and 3, and this represents the standard (stand-alone) *Siddhachakra*, which is commonly used in *puja*. The second main component is the protective rings of deities.<sup>64</sup>

During this festive occasion *puja* is daily performed to all deities collectively and each name is also worshipped in turn with special ceremonies and offerings for nine days. The worshipper keeps special fast known as *Amil* for the whole period taking on the third part of the day water and one food simply boiled, without mixing anything with it to make palatable. On the last day *Nava Pada Puja* is performed before the *Siddhachakra Mandal* with singing and offerings and pouring pots of *Pakhal* consisting of water, milk, saffron and clarified butter.



### 34. Diwali and other Festivals

Diwali is celebrated amongst all the Hindu communities of India as a day of rejoicing and invoking the goddess of Wealth. The Jains hold it as especially sacred day being the day of *Nirvana* of *Mahavira Swami*. They present offerings of sweets particularly the Laddu in the temple. A large number of them visit *Pawapuri* in Bihar to attend the anniversary and *Mahotsab* at the place where *Nirvana* of *Lord Mahavira* took place more than five centuries before Christ.

*Meru Terash on Margasira (Agrahayan)*: This Jain religious day, the *Meru Terash on Margasira (Margashisha) (Agrahayan)* is celebrated on 13<sup>th</sup> day of the dark moon of the month of *Margashisha*. This is the day of *Nirvana* of *Rishavdev*, the first of the *Tirthankaras* of the present age *Avasarpini*.

*Mouna Ekadasi*: This is celebrated on the 11<sup>th</sup> of *Margashisha Sukla*. This day is generally spent in fasting with a vow of silence for the whole day. Jains also observe *posadh* or sitting in one place for 12 or 24 hours. The day is connected with one 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> *Tirthankra*.

*Pous Badi*: It is another day of celebration in connection with *Parsavnath*, the 23<sup>rd</sup> *Tirthankar*, as his birthday anniversary. *Chaitra Purnima* is also celebrated as a very auspicious day of god *Adinath*.

*Akshaya Tritiya*: This falls on 3<sup>rd</sup> *Baisakh Sudi*, and is associated with the first *Tirthankra Adinath*. *Asharh Sukla Chaturdasi* is considered as a day of religious merit.

*Chaturmas* commences from this day and it is generally observed with fasting by the Jains. *Chaturmas* ends after four months, on the *Kartik Sukla Chaturdashi* which is also celebrated.



# Dogra Women's Festivals, Fasts, Ceremonial Observations and Special Vows

## 1. Introduction

Dogras in general are very spiritual people. The religious countenance of Dogra men and women is reflected in their acts of fasting, oblation, prayer, worship, austerities, vigils, vows, offerings to gods and holy personalities and other activities of piety and devotion. One of the main fasts and special vows kept and observed by Dogra women is the fast of *Ekadashi* (the 11<sup>th</sup> day of each half of the month of Hindu lunar calendar). There are 26 *Ekadashis* in a year. Similarly there are 12 or 13 *Punneyian* (full moon days), and equal number of *Masseyas* (*Amavasya*-day 15 after full moon or the new moon day) and also the fasts related to all seven day of the week. Devout Dogra women observe fasts, recite or listen to *kathas*, the Puranic folk tales associated with these special days, and do *puja* and give alms.

There is an age-old tradition to keep at least one fast in a week according to individual preference. Fasts of Thursday, Monday or Tuesday are most popular. *Punneyian* and *Massaeya* are considered as special scared days and fast on *Somvari Massaeya* is believed to bring special merits. Bathing in sacred streams like Devak, Tawi, Chenab, lakes like Mansar, Surinsar, doing *puja* and giving alms at pilgrimage centers are considered as pious acts. Apart from these, the fasts associated with *kul-devtas* and or *kul-devis* are observed according to customs of one's family and clan. There is also a practice of celebrating *satwah* (*saptah*) by



women, who come together to hold week long religious acts like fasts, *katha-kirtan*, *aarti* and *jagarna*.

Thus women in traditional Dogra society are the mainstay of religious traditions and their continuance and transference to the next generations. Dogra women play an important role in celebration of all the festivals; however there are some festivals and festive occasions that fall in the exclusive domain of Dogra women. Observed with great devotion and dedication, some such festivals and special sacred occasions are also characterized by ritual arts as under:

## 2. Nirjala Kadashi (Ekadashi) & Tamdey-Dharma Tihada

These are two main special days for women in the summer season. *Nirjala Ekadashi* is day when women and other members of the family, take an early bath, and give ritual offerings (*mansana*) of clay pots, *pakkhis* (hand-held fans), fruits etc, to Brahmins, Sadhus, poor and the needy. Women keep fast and some even do not drink water for the whole day.

Coming on the very next day of *Nirjala Ekadashi*, the *Tamdey* also called as *Dharma Tihada* is observed on the *sangraand* (*Sankranti*) of *Haad* (*Aashad*: June-July) month. *Dharma Tihada* is also an occasion for ritual bath, fasting and *daan*. On this day, it is customary to give away as *daan*—clothes, cereals, vegetable, fruits and clay pots. There is an old practice of organizing *shabeels* (a practice of serving free drinks) of cold and sweet water for the passers-by in bazaars or other places.

In Duggar, on the day of *Dharma Tihada*, daughters and sisters are specially remembered. They are invited to their



parental homes and are given gifts of clothes, cereals, fruits, sweets and some cash. In case they are at their in-laws place then the gifts are sent to them. Dharam Tihada is being celebrated in Duggar since ancient times. It is reflected in lyrics of 16<sup>th</sup> century ballad of Baba Jitto, in which after Baba's self sacrifice, his daughter Bua Kori laments: "*Ae Aayaaa Dharma Tihada, Aaiee Lohri Bapu Jag Jaiee, Dhiein Aalein Dhiein Saddiyian, Bua Gi Kunn Saddaye*", ("*Dharma Tihada* draws closer, so is Lohri my dear father, those having daughters have called them home, but who is going to send for Bua").

### 3. Radae

Observed by unmarried as well as married women, this month long festival which involves ritual sowing, starts from *sangraand* (first day) of *Haad* (*Ashaad*), and concludes on the first day of *Soun* (*Sawan*-July-August) month. Just about a week before the festival, the girls jointly decide and fix a place for '*Radae*', which is normally an open courtyard or the roof of a house. Then each girl, as per the number of male members in her family, collects broken necks of clay pots. These necks are placed in the designated spot on the ground and different seeds of lentils and cereals sown in them. The neck in the center is called as *Tahmma Raada* which represents the head of the family while other *radaas*, representing rest of male members of the family, are placed around it. Each *raada* is marked with colorful circular design and different shapes. Colors are made out of ordinary and household materials like turmeric, charcoal, brown colored earth-*loshti*, and rice or wheat flour, white earth-*makol*. The girls after painting *raadas* sing folk songs and eat together.



At end of the month, on day of *Badda Rutt*, enthusiastic girls and women observe another special day called *Skolarde* by wearing self-made ear rings (*Skolarde*) of beads, *kanari* and silk threads. After looking at the strength of plants in the *raadas*, elders of family or village decide about the crops to be sown in the fields.

#### 4. Bachh Duah & Dhrubadi

On the fourth day after *Krishna Janmashtami*, festival of *Bachh Duah* is observed by Dogra women to pray for the welfare of children and family and cattle. Two days before the festival, ladies soak black gram, *urd dal* and small stones or pebbles and *druba* grass, called *biradd*. Next day, *biradd* is placed in a basket and covered with leaves of *brainkad* so that it sprouts by the time of *puja*. On the fast day, women wake up early, clean the house and apply fresh cow dung in courtyard, take bath and then cook as many *Rutt* as are the male members of their family. Afterwards ladies get busy in preparation of threads which are yellowed with mixture of wheat flour and turmeric. Later, out of same mixture, women make small figures of *kattu* and *bachhu* (calves of cow and buffalo), *chatiayan* (kind of earthen pots), *madahni* (wooden churner of curd) etc.

Dressed in traditional costumes and ornaments, women then go to a water source like pond or spring for *puja* of *Bachh Duah*. Some women whose wish of son's marriage or birth of a child has been fulfilled go to the spot of *puja*, singing along with a band playing music. There is also a tradition of serving *biradd* sprouts to a newlywed bride. After *puja*, the *Rutts* are distributed to daughters of the family or a *prouhtani* and then ladies cook and eat *phalahar* (fruit based



meal).

Fast of *Radha Ashtami* and *Mahalakshmi* is called as *Dhrubadi* in Duggar. This day also marks the start of *shukla paksha ashtami* of *Bhaadon* (*Bhadra*) month and a sixteen day special vow. Women tie to their arm a yellow thread with sixteen knots and do its *puja* for sixteen days with *druba* grass. The vow is concluded with *naveid* of *rutts* (sweet wheat bread).

### 5. Panj Pihkham or Tulsi Brat

*Panj Pihkham* or fast of *Tulsi* is observed in month of *Katte* (*Kartik*-October-November). Girls, married women, young and old, observe one, two, three or five days *puja* of the *Tulsi* plant. Those who light lamps of *Panj Pihkham*, start the preparation well in advance. Women light 101 or 360 cotton wicks and take 101 or 360 *pradakshana* (circumambulations) of the *Tulsi* plant which is generally planted in a raised cuboid stone or brick structure, often in middle of the house's courtyard or in front of the house. This structure is decorated with folk paintings by women. Red colored cloth bedecked with *kanari* is also put on the plant. These five days are an occasion of a lot of activity. Those women who do not keep five-day vow, also abstain from eating radish, *baingan* (brinjal) and sugarcane. On the last day, after *puja*, all the three items are offered to the *Tulsi* plant. Those women who light lamps inside their houses or in temples on last day of the fast, cook *sat-saga*-a combination of seven vegetables, *bhatthora* or *babbroo* and send this *neivada* to relatives and dear ones. During this month-long festival women also water the *Tulsi* plant every day.



## 6. Naratey (Navaratras)

*Naratey* are celebrated twice in a year and mark the beginning of spring month of *Chaitra* and beginning of autumn in *Asayuja*, after *Shraaddhas*. *Naratey* (*Navaratras*: the word literally means nine nights) last for nine days in honour of the nine manifestations of goddess Durga. During *Naratey* devotees of goddess observe fasts. Brahmins are fed and prayers are offered for protection of health and property. In Jammu region, *Naratey* are celebrated with great devotion and are most important festivals for young girls and women. It was a common practice that young girls in group would go early in the morning to a pond, spring or a river to take bath and then after coming back, do *puja* of the Devi fashioned out of sea shells or other materials by singing *bishanpatte* and *Mata's aarti*.

In the evenings the groups of girls would assemble at one place and have meals together. On seventh day, girls kept fast and in evening dressed up as *kaahn*-Krishan and *skahiyen*-Krishna's consorts would do *Jagarna*. On day of *ashtami*-eighth day, girls dressed up as *kaahn* and *skahiyen* go to houses of neighbors and collect some cash as a gift. In cities the *Naratey* celebrations have increasingly become an individual affair while in villages *Naratey* are still celebrated with fervour as a community activity.

## 7. Kareya Chauth

Also called *Karwa Chauth*, on this day married women observe fast for long life, well being and prosperity of their husbands. Unmarried women also observe this fast for their future husbands. *Kareya Chauth* is celebrated nine days before *Deyali* in month of October. Womenfolk start



preparation for this fast well in advance and arrange or buy items which are in high demand those days, such as jewelry, bangles, henna, *saris* or other dresses etc. One day before the fast, ladies collect items for *sargi* (the food items that the fasting women eat before sunrise) like *pheiniyan*, milk, *keuhr*, sweets, fruits, dried coconut and dates. After taking bath and keeping aside a share of *sargi* for Mata Parvati, the womenfolk eat *sargi* and thereafter until the moon appears in the night sky, abstain from water or any other food. They busy themselves in household chores with the exception of sewing, knitting, spinning of *charkha*, going to fields, etc. In the evening, they cook and follow the Punjabi practice of *beya batana* and also listen to the *katha* of *Biro Kudi*. After sunset, women dressed up in finery and decked up in ornaments, gather in a group at some neighbor's house and perform *beya mansana* ceremony. *Beya* normally comprises thirteen *matthis*, or *sava-batti* (a *batti* was an old measure of two *ser*—one *ser* is 933.10 g) almonds, a dress and cash. This *beya*, after ritual bowing and touching of feet is given to the husband or an elder in family or clan, who in turn also gives the lady his blessings and a *sagan* (gift). After completion of this ritual, everyone waits for the moon to appear on the horizon. Immediately after sighting the moon, women offer *argha* by looking at the moon through a sieve and sprinkling of water. It is only after completing the *argha* ritual that women take water and food.

### 8. Puhggae Da Bart (Vrata)

The fast of *Puhgga* falls on the fourth day from the *puneyian* falling after Lohri in *Magh* month (January-February). Women of Duggar keep the fast of *Puhgga* for



the welfare and safety of their sons. Unlike *Kareya Chauth*, they do not eat *sargi* or give *argha* to moon before breaking the fast but follow the same rigor in keeping the *Puhgga* fast. At night after giving *argha* and *mansana* of radish and sugarcane, women who are not supposed to eat any cereal, partake *Puhgga* as per tradition. The fast is called so because on this day in most of the homes womenfolk prepare *Puhgga*, and also do its *daan*. During the *Puhgga aarti*, Lord Ganesha is also worshipped. *Puhgga* is a special sweet which is also available in the market. It is made from mixing in equal quantity Sesame seeds, *Khoya*-(gradually vaporized thick chunks of milk) and *Gur* or Sugar. This sweet is generally relished during winter season.

## 9. Channan Chhatt

Two days before *Janmashtami*, a special fast of *Channan Chhatt* is observed by Dogra girls. As per scriptures, this fast is related to the birth of *Balrama*, elder brother of *Lord Krishna*. In Jammu region, this fast is kept by young girls till they reach maturity i.e. the stage of menstruation. It is a popular belief that by keeping this fast the womenfolk would be liberated from the ordeal of the monthly cycle of menstruation in their future births. This fast is a difficult one as young girls are asked to abstain even from drinking water. It is also a practice that immediately after marriage, the in-law's family organize *mokh* (*puja* for getting free from binding of the vow) of the fast. The newlyweds then hand it over to their unmarried sisters-in-law. In present times, when the conventional social status and role of young girls is undergoing a sea change, the fasts like *Channan Chhatt* are being observed by only a few families, that too in very remote areas.



## 10. Hoi

This folk festival celebrated by womenfolk is held on the *Krishna Paksha Ashtami* of *Katte* (*Kartik*) month. The women from *kameyhar* (Potter) and *cheehr* (*Jheewar*-members of the caste that brings water and cook in Dogra houses) families go to houses and collect small wooden *pattis*-boards. After mixing white clay on these boards, they paint different images like that of a standing woman wearing ear rings and head dress. In the lower portion seven human figures with raised arms are shown and also seven trees.

The wooden board is divided into seven squares, each having an image of child and other human. Other images like a *naga*, cow and calf, flower pots etc., are also painted. On this day women keep fast and out of wheat flour make *suttu-bhuttu*—which are shaped like English letter S and offered as *nevaïd* after the *pūja* of the painted image of standing women on wooden boards and considered as of *Hoi Mata*. *Daan* of wheat flour, rice, pulses, fruits and vegetables is also given to the *cheehri*.

According to a popular legend related to *Hoi*, one woman had seven sons. One day while digging clay in a jungle for painting her house on the occasion of Diwali, she accidentally killed a baby porcupine. Within one year, she lost all her seven sons and was extremely grief stricken. She shared the story of the mishap in the jungle with an older woman of village, who said since she had told the truth; she stood absolved of half of her sin. But for the other half she had to do *pūja* of *Devi Bhagwati* while keeping in front of her the painted images of seven porcupines. She kept the fast and did *pūja* on the day of *Krishna Paksha Ashtami* of *Kattak month*. She was freed from the curse and her sons came alive.



According to another legend, during *Satya Yuga*, in reign of King *Akal Mritayu*, there was a severe drought and many humans, birds and animals died. When people requested the sages to show them the way out of the calamity, they suggested offering worship to goddess *Ahoi*, on the day of *Kattak Ashtami* of *Krishna Paksha*. People kept the fast and did *puja* but were not benefitted. When a *cheehr* maiden kept the fast, goddess *Ahoi* was pleased and informed that she had unleashed drought as the Brahmins and other groups have fallen from their *dharma*. Now I am happy and give a boon that if you all follow your respective religious percepts, you will not suffer. You will gain immensely by worshipping the *cheehr* maiden. Thereafter people started worshipping *Ahoi Mata* and also the *cheehr* maiden.

## 11. Tikka

This festival is a celebration of the pious bond between a sister and her brother. It falls on last day of the five-day-long *Deyali* festival. Celebrations of this day are similar to festival of *Rakkhadi*. On this day, sisters pray for their real brothers and *Dharam Bhais* to have long and happy lives by applying *Tikka-Tilak* on foreheads of their brothers and giving them gifts.

This ceremony signifies the duty of a brother to protect his sister as well as a sister's blessings for her brother. According to a popular legend about the festival, *Yamraj*, the god of Death, visited his sister *Yami* on this particular day. She put the auspicious *tilak* on his forehead, garlanded him and served him with special dishes. Together, they ate the sweets, talked and enjoyed themselves to their heart's content. While parting *Yamraj* gave her a special gift as a



token of his love and in return *Yami* also gave him a lovely gift which she had made with her own hands. That day *Yamraj* announced that anyone who receives *tilak* from his sister will never be thrown in *Naraka* and will be saved from sudden death. That is why this day of *Tikka* or *Bhai Duj* is also known by the name of *Yama Dwitiya*.



# Fairs of Jammu

## 1. Introduction

*Melas* or fairs of Jammu region, which find such fanciful description in folk songs, have since ages been occasions for entertainment, exchange of news and information and shopping for rural communities. The village groups treading on foot for long distances through winding hills and stony paths, crests and troughs often traveling overnight, congregate at the site of a *mela* to enjoy the festive moments assured by wooden merry-go-rounds, jugglers, *Chhinj*-wrestling matches, along with the much awaited shopping at an impromptu market of make-shift kiosks selling a variety of usable things and exotic goodies.

Other than the attraction of *Chhinj*—an exclusive male-oriented sport where no woman is seen during the lustily cheered wrestling matches—*melas* have been the traditional community spaces for everyone to have a gala time: children eating candies, ice creams, crispy *jalebies*, *pakor*as, *sharbat*, buying balloons and toys; the women thronging *pharris*-little stalls put on ground and makeshift shacks selling bangles, *bindis*, *sindhoor*, imitation jewelry, ornaments, trinkets etc. But with changing times, especially the aftermath of armed insurgency in Jammu hills for the last twenty five years have adversely affected peoples' participation in *melas*. Nonetheless *melas* which are held in remote areas still maintain their old-world charm and attraction for local population. But the fairs in cities and towns are witnessing a change. In their contemporary avatars, traditional *melas* are witnessing proactive involvement of the state government.



From showcasing as tourist attractions, holding exhibitions, stalls etc., to create awareness about developmental programs and opportunities available to common citizens under various governmental schemes, *melas* have emerged as sites of confluence between tradition and modernity.

Most fairs held in Jammu city and different parts of region are either religious fairs or special days celebrating the change of seasons. A number of fairs are also held at important places of pilgrimages, shrines of folk deities in honour of folk heroes, historic figures and on the *mazars* of Sufi saints. Jammu being a multi-religious society, festivals of Muslims, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists are also celebrated with devotion, gusto and fervor. Main festivals celebrated in Jammu region are as under:

## 2. Basooa (Baisakhi Fair)

To celebrate annual day of Baisakhi on *sangraand* (Sankranti) of *Baisakh* month (April), fairs are held all over the Jammu region. In Udhampur, this festival is observed on the banks of river Devika for three consecutive days. While in Ramnagar it is organized by banks of river Tawi that flows by western side of the town.

In city of Jammu, before partition “there were two Baisakhi fairs held: One lasting from morning till evening at the intersection where Dhakki Mastagarh and Dhakki Pir Mittha. The fair was a low key affair and reflected the temperament of an average city dweller. The other fair began at noon at the Ranbir Canal and lasted till sunset. This was true and earthy affair with bands of *Bhangra* dancers from various villages competing for attention. With every band of dancers were folk versifiers who produced their doggerel on



spot. Sometimes two groups would get into a competition, dancing and versifying at the same time. Occasionally these competitions would end up in fights"<sup>65</sup>. Though the *Basoaa mela* in Jammu has lost its hustle bustle of olden days, the efforts of the state agencies have resurrected the *mela* and the Ranbir Canal comes alive on Baisakhi day with people gathering here in a festive mood and doing shopping at the makeshift bazaar which comes up on the occasion.

In Ramkot, the capital city of the erstwhile princely state of Mankot, the two-day Basoaa festival is held at the Chougan by the side of an adjoining rivulet. The people from adjoining hills like Sumarta, etc. come down in groups to Ramkot. The human traffic here continues to swell from the first day onward and groups from nearby villages keep arriving on the spot during the intervening night. A makeshift market comes up in which all sorts of farming implements, clothes, other utilitarian goods, decorative items, etc., are eagerly bought by hill people who wait for the fair to make purchases including their dental work done from the *desi* dentists, who do a brisk business. Folk parties singing *Bhaakhs*, *Geetru* and *Chhinj* are major attractions of Ramkot *mela* which emerges as a showcase of different folk practices of the hilly *Kandi* areas.

*Melas* on the day of *Basoaa* are also held at places like Billawar (near the 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century Hari-Hara Temple), Nilkantha Temple, Basohli, Shiv Temple and Airma, near Kathua, Mansar Lake, Purmandal and many other places.

### 3. Mela Bahu Fort

Fairs are held at the ancient temple of Mahakali at Bahu Fort, Jammu, twice a year, during March-April



and September-October, on the auspicious occasions of *Ramnavmi* and *Naratas*. During these colorful festivals, people in large numbers visit the temple of *goddess Kali* inside Bahu Fort and seek divine blessings. The large gathering of devotees including children, not only enjoy all sorts of entertainments like slides and turning boards but also take pleasure in partaking of delectable specialties such as ice-creams, *kulfi*, *malai-baraf*, cane-sugar juice, *gole-gappay*, *aaloo cholay*, *kachaloo*, *pakor*as and *jalebies*. The sellers of balloons, cotton candy and of course the entertainers like snake charmers and *madaris* draw large crowds of children. *Navratra* festival held at the Mahakali temple in past was an event of much celebration and gaiety for Jammuities, who after descending from various *dhakkis* of the old city, would cross the river Tawi on boats or through a temporary bridge called *Bajra* specially constructed for the occasion. After crossing the river Tawi men, women and children started the uphill climb to the Kali temple, Bahu, on a zigzag path lined with small temples and make shift kiosks. This way-side market that sold clay and wooden toys, fancy make-up items for ladies or minor household items, sweets, *jalebies*, *pakor*as and the famously extra sweet *barfi*, offered a unique kind of spectacle that had one or the other thing for everyone. In those days, the big open ground in front of the fort also came alive with a market of temporary shops that only stayed up during the *Narata* days. Besides Bahu fair, fairs during *Naratas* are also organized at many other places associated with various incarnations of *goddess Durga* such as like *Chichi Mata*, *Samba*, *Balasundari* and *Sukrala Devi*, Billawar.



#### 4. Chamliyal Mela

A unique annual fair is held on Indo-Pak International Border at village Chamliyal, some 42 kilometers from Jammu in Ramgarh sector of district Samba. Every year, thousands of devotees on both sides of the border participate in the separate fairs at the Hindu shrine of Baba Dalip Singh Manhas, popularly known as *Baba Chamliyal*.

According to oral traditions, *Baba Chamliyal*'s real name was Baba Dalip Singh Manhas. He was a saintly person who lived in the village Chamliyal. He used to offer water to thirsty travelers and work for the welfare of needy people and talk about universal brotherhood. Since his popularity was not acceptable to a certain group of people who hatched a conspiracy and killed him. His head fell far away from the place of assassination while the body remained at village Saidawali, in Sialkot district.

To retain memory of his philosophy and practices, the people built two memorials, one at the place where his head fell at Chamliyal, near Dug village of Vijaypur block of Samba district and the other at Saidawali, now situated in Pakistan. *Baba Chamliyal*'s shrine is known as *dargah* in local parlance. The performance of rituals within the shrine is on the line of *dargahs*, for instance the offering of *chaddar*. People of the area ascribe some miracles to the Baba. One of such miracle is associated with Baba's power to cure people suffering from skin diseases. Devotees on both sides of the border throng on the fourth Thursday of June, every year, to pay obeisance to *Baba Chamliyal* and collect from the *dargah* of the famous saint, holy *Sharbat* (sweet water) and *Shakkar* (wet soil), which are believed to have medicinal properties against various skin ailments.



## 5. Mela Chaiter Chaudya

*Chaiter* (March-April), the first month of the Hindu calendar, is considered as a sacred month. Each day of the month is dedicated to a different god. Major festivals like Holi, *Ram Noumi* and *Hanuman Jayanti*, fall in this month and are celebrated in Jammu region.

The day of *Chaiter Chaudya* (*Chait Chaudash*) holds special significance for Dogras as it is considered as the sacred day for performing rituals of *Jal Tarpan* (offering of water) and *Pind Daan* (offering of food) to the souls of ancestors. The practice seems to follow the ancient tradition from the time of Hindu epics. According to Mahabharata, for the peace of souls of those killed in the 18-day epic battle, *Pandavas* had performed their last rites at Pehowa, Kurukshetra.

In Jammu region, the day of *Chaiter Chaudya* is celebrated with religious fervour and a number of *melas* are held. One such famous *mela* is held at Uttar Behani, about 25 kilometers south-east of Jammu. People from nearby as well as distant places gather here to perform *puja* and prayers for the peace of departed souls with the help of *pandas* and *purohits* and offer prayers. Uttar Behani gets its name from the fact that the Devak River (also locally known as *Gupta Ganga*) flows here in the northern direction. It is considered as an act of religious merit to take bath in the holy river Devak, on the *Chaiter Chaudya* day. *Melas* on the day of *Chaiter Chaudya* are also held at Jammu's other pilgrimage centers and religious places located near lakes, rivers and springs such as Devak, Udampur, Sudhamahdev, Airma, Mansar and Reasi.



## 6. Purmandal Mela

Purmandal is located some 37 kilometers to the south-east of Jammu. This ancient pilgrimage centre is regularly visited by large number of devotees. But during *Shivaratri* (February-March), for three days, the small town and its famous Shiva temples witness a huge rush of devotees who gather here to celebrate marriage of Lord Shiva and goddess Parvati. According to a legend the famous Umapati temple, the main shrine at Purmandal, was originally constructed by a Kashmiri King Benidutt in 10<sup>th</sup> century CE. But the present complex is said to have been built by Raja Man Singh of Amber after he had won a battle at Kabul. Sikh Maharaja Ranjit Singh had been another of the distinguishing patrons at Purmandal, where he built *Eklingonkar temple*. The Dogra Rajas held Purmandal in high esteem, and they along with Ranis, would arrive at Purmandal in a grand procession. The people of Jammu also come out in their colorful best to celebrate Shivaratri at the cave temples at Peer Khoh, the Ranbireshwar Temple and the Panjbhaktar Temple in Jammu city. In fact, on the day of Shivaratri there are celebrations at all Shiva temples in Jammu region.

## 7. Jhiri Mela

This fair gets its name after the Samadhi of *Bava Jitto* at village Jhiri near Shamachak, some 2 kilometers from Jammu city on Akhnoor-Poonch road. Here a nine-day fair is held on *Kartik Purnima* every year (October-November) to honour and celebrate the memory of *Bava Jitto*, the 15th-16th century folk hero of Duggar.

During the last five centuries, the once humble shrine of the *Bava Jitto* has grown into a sacred landscape that is spread



across more than 520 *kanals* of land granted as 'gehar' by Dogra rajas. Other than the main shrine, the *samadhi* of *Bava Jitto* and many other religious structures including number of *saraais* have been built in phases by devotees. Another part of the sacred landscape is the *Bave De Tlaa*, a nearby pond which is known to have miraculous power of curing skin diseases. Believers not only take a dip in the water of pond but also take back home the earth from the pond as *shakkar*. It is also believed that if an issueless lady takes bath in the pond she would be blessed with a child.

*Jhiri mela*, the biggest farmer's fair of north India, like other such congregations, is a spectacle to behold. For the pious minded, there is regular recitation of folk songs by *Yogis* and *Gardis* (folk singers) in form of Bava's *Karaks* (devotional ballads) at the main shrine. Many entertaining cultural shows are also staged. *Dangals*—wrestling matches, in which wrestlers from far and wide vie for more than 40 *maalis*, draw a large crowd of sport enthusiasts. Camel rides, merry go-rounds, slides, giant-wheels, and the famous *Mout Ka Kuaan*—Well of Death (trick motorcycling inside consortium of wood-planks) are special attraction for children and teenagers.

## 8. Mela Patt, Bhadarwah

*Mela Patt* is a famous festival of Bhadarwah which is being celebrated since medieval times. This daytime fair is celebrated at *Khakhal*, a centrally located place in the township of Bhadarwah. The festival, participated by people irrespective of cast and creed, begins on the fifth day immediately after Kailash Yatra that is on the day of *Vinayak Chaturthi* or *Pathar (Ganesh) Chouth* (August-September).



The festival is said to have started in 16<sup>th</sup> century when Moughal emperor Akbar at his court was much impressed by the spiritual power of Raja Nagpal, ruler of Bhadarwah Principality who attributed it to the blessings of the serpent god Nagraj Vasuki. Much wealth was awarded to Raja Nagpal as a token of respect to Serpent god from the imperial treasure of Emperor Akbar. The wealth comprised metallic vessels, gold and silver ornaments, silk fabrics and musical instruments.

On the evening of *Ganesh Choth*, the *Jahari* (the conical metallic pot) is carried by a representative belonging to *Raj-purohit* family in Bhadarwah and shouting slogans, "*Jai Bolo Nagae Basik Ki Jai, Phir Bolo Sanchae Durbar ki Jai*". The procession passes through the main bazaars of town and culminates at *Vasuki Dhera* Temple. Next morning after routine worship in the Temple the *Jahari* moves to the house of *Rajgurus* in Mohalla Khakhal. A team of selected persons of the locality called *Dashan* prepare the traditional *Patt Jhanki*. The *Patt*, a heavy load of conical shape with *Jahari* on the top profusely decorated with marigold flower garlands and adorned with number of cloth-pieces of gorgeous colours is made ready for exhibition.

With the break of dawn on *Nag Panchami*, i.e. *Rishi Panchami*, a devotee carries this *Patt* on his head in a procession led by the *Chela* (medium) of the deity along with musicians. They go to *Ganesh Math* for paying homage to god *Ganpati*. Then the procession reaches compound of *Vasak Dhera* Temple. Traditional dance *Dheku* is performed before the Naga deity and this procession concludes at the house of *Rajgurus* in Khakhal. Devotees throng there to have *darshan* of *Patt* and pay their homage to *Nag Raj Basuki* and



### *Raja Nagpal.*

The actual fair starts at about five in the evening. People from every corner of the region, irrespective of caste, creed and sex come to witness the fair with zeal and reverence and shower flower petals over the *Patt* and the procession. The dance during the *mela* is performed with harmonious beats of drums, playing on flutes and blowing of horns and conches. The man carrying the *Patt* is encircled by *Dashans* who help the dancing person in getting refreshed by supporting the *Patt* in a very typical style. The resting period is of very short duration, and the dance continues in this manner. This fair continues for three days which are days of public rejoicing. The festival concludes with *Dheku* dance.

### **9. Mela Sudhamahadev**

A three day long festival is held on *Purnima* of *Saun* month (June-July) at the famous Shiva temple at *Suddhamahadev*. People from far off areas of Ramban, Ramanagar, Udhampur, Jammu and Haryana come to attend the festival. During the three days, after praying at Shiva temple devotees also take bath in the Beeni Sang, the rivulet, which flows out from top of the *Dhaar Shivgarh* and is considered an abode of innumerable saints. Many devotees also take bath in the sin-destroying-spring (*Pap Nashni bowli*) situated just at the entrance of the temple. Pilgrims also visit other holy places of the *Panjthirthi* (confluence of five *tirthas*) such as Gouri Kund, Haridwar and Mantali. During the festival, folk artists from surrounding areas turn up in large numbers to sing folk songs like *Bhakhaan*, *Geetru*. A number of cultural troops from other parts of the state also perform on the occasion. The main attraction for pilgrims is the temporary



market of sweets and toy shops and other eatable corners set up by locals as well as outside vendors while children are seen enjoying the wooden merry-go round rides. The *mela* concludes with holding of *Chhinj* on the last day.

## 10. Mela Siddha Suankha

A fair of great local as well as regional importance is held on the first Sunday in the month of June, every year, at holy place of *Nath Yogi Siddha Gorla*, situated

40 kilometers from Jammu in village Suankha near Vijaypur, Samba district. The spiritual legacy of *Nath Panth* in Jammu can be traced back to *Guru Gorakhnath*, renowned yogi who during 11<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> century spread the *Nath* tradition far and wide.

The fair at Siddha Suankha celebrates the memory of *Bava Siddha Gorla Nath*, who stayed at the village and took salvation while bathing in the pond located at the present site of *devasthan*. Since then it is believed that the water of the holy pond has special powers. *Bava Siddha Gorla*, is presiding deity of many clans and over two lakh devotees from Jammu and Kashmir and nearby states of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh gather here during a seven-day long *mela*. The fair presents the true colours of a rural *mela* with a makeshift market, children's joy rides and giant wheels and locals offering *sharbat* and *langar* to the devotees.

## 11. Narsingha (Narasimha) Choudya Mela

The day of *Shukla Paksha Chadurdashi* of *Baisakha* (April) month is celebrated as *Narsingh Chaudya*. It was on this day that god Vishnu incarnated himself in the form of



*Narsingha* (*Narasimha*—half man and half lion) for safety of his devotee *Prahalada*. Worship of *Narsingha* is popular amongst the Dogra Hindus since ancient times and temples dedicated to *Lord Narsingha* are found at different parts of the region. On day of *Narsingha Choudiya*, festivals are celebrated with great pomp and show. *Yajna* and sacred feasts are also organized at *Narsingha* temples.

The most important and biggest fair is held at *Narsingha temple*, Ghagwal, in Kathua district. Said to be 1600 years old shrine, the temple complex is located by the sides of a huge pond. The *samadhi* of *Baba Nar Hari Dass ji Maharaj* is also housed in the temple complex which is a seat of *Maha Mandleshwar*. An idol of *Mata Annapurna* in her unified form is installed here. During the annual fair, a local market comes up and people from hilly areas, especially nearby Gaddis, sell their woolen products such as blankets and handicrafts. Besides *Narsingha temple*, Ghagwal, fairs are also organized at four places in Ramnagar, Udampur, Parnala and Billawar.

**11.1. Shivaratri Melas:** On the sacred day of *Mahashivaratri*, fairs are organized at many places in Jammu region like Sudhamahadeva, Peerkho, Billawar, Airwan and Nilakanth temple, Basholi, Kameshwar Mandir, Akhnoor, Shiv Khori and Dansal.

## 12. Gulabgarh Mela

The *Gulabgarh Mela* is held on *Anant Chowdashi* in the month of *Bhadon* (August-September). A large number of people from Paddar, Nagseni and Kishtawar and neighboring



Himachal Pradesh participate in this famous *mela*.

According to oral accounts the *Gulabgarh Mela* is celebrated in memory of an old lady of village *Mighla*. She lost her seven sons after having disobeyed *Shakti Mata* and invited her wrath. The *mela* is held to appease the goddess and seek her blessings.

Before participating in the *mela*, the devotees worship *Shakti Mata* in the local temple and offer *Prasad*. The highlight of the *mela* is *Zagru/Jagru*, which is held in the vast round of Gulabgarh. Huge logs of wood which are to be burnt the whole night long are collected at the site of the *mela*. After dinner men, women, children dressed up in colorful attire assemble at the site. A huge bonfire is made and music and dance also starts with playing of big drums called as *Dhons*, *Ransingha* and flutes. Men and women dance the *Kud*, which goes on till dawn and concludes with *chelas* entering the dance area with tridents and doing astounding performances.

The *chelas* who participate in the *mela* are devotees of *Jwala Mata* of village Luddar, the *Durga Mata* temple of village Sohal and *Inder Devta* of village Atholi. Traditional brewage *Cchang* is lavishly served to guests who are treated with traditional hospitality and cordiality<sup>66</sup>.



# Oral Narrative Forms of Jammu

## 1. Introduction

The popular expression for oral narrative forms as Folk Literature or Oral literature appears to be a misnomer for the body of cultural material and traditions which are transmitted orally from one generation to another through listening, repeating, mastering and apprenticeship.

This rich treasure of spoken, sung and voiced form of time-honored utterances, are typical to traditional societies where the technologies of literacy like writing were, until recent times, unfamiliar to most of the members. Therefore the use of word 'literature' for the oral communication may not be the right label.

Like all traditional societies, the folk and tribal societies of Jammu have a rich tradition of oral modes of thought and expression, which owes to the topography of harsh arid plains and mountainous terrain, remoteness and inaccessibility, and have managed largely to survive the effects of globalization and homogenization. Noticeable for native purity of form and language, the use of colloquial touches, these folk oral expressions show close and dynamic relationship with practical life of the people. Reflecting social and religious life of the natives of Jammu, the folk-oral expressions of different communities also mirror their ways of approach to nature.

Oral narrative forms can be broadly classified into two broader categories—prose form and poetry form. The prose forms include folk-tales, riddles, idioms and proverbs. Sung and recited individually and in a group, folk poetry and its



related forms comprise ballads, lullabies, work songs and songs associated with rituals and rites of birth, marriage and death. Oral poetry is also connected with festive occasions, feasts and ceremonies.

With each passing day, we are increasingly surrounded by high technology in which a New Orality (as against the Primary Orality of pre-writing phase and Secondary Orality stage brought about by invention of written word, manuscripts and moveable type<sup>67</sup>) is sustained by radio, television, internet and a hoard of other electronic devices that depend for their existence and functioning on writing and print.

The result is that oral cultures of the past hardly exist today as every culture is increasingly associated with literacy through writing with its effects on human cognitive faculties. Still many cultures and sub-cultures, like that of Jammu and Kashmir, are able to preserve to varying degrees, much of the mind-set of Primary Orality. The result is that the heritage of oral narrative forms enjoys a popular appeal amongst hill and highland communities even today.

## 2. Forms of Dogri Oral Narratives

**2 A. *Katth-Kahni (Folk Tale) and Types:*** Folk tales called as *Katth-Kahanian* in Dogri are a prose narrative that has all the elements of stories preserved through memory and memorizing transmitted orally from one generation to another by professional story tellers and common folk.

In Duggar there is large treasure of *Katth-Kahanian* which deals with multiple themes ranging from mythologies and mystery tales to parables and humour. Many folk-tales are woven around local deities, saints and places of



pilgrimage and also about social-domestic issues. "Around two thousand folktales have been collected and published by governmental and non-governmental institutions such as Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages and Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, along with a few other literary organizations and individuals<sup>68</sup>. There are hundreds of folk-tales which are yet to be documented. Way back in the third or fourth decade of this century (20th century), Dr Brown of Pennsylvania University collected about a hundred Dogri folk tales during the period he worked as a teacher of English in the Prince of Wales College, Jammu. Early in 1960s, one of his students Mrs. Norico Maida came from America to Jammu and collected some four hundred Dogri folk tales for her Doctorate<sup>69</sup>.

**2 B. Types of Folk Tales:** In Dogri folk prose, there is, as in other developed languages, a wide variety of *katth-kahanian*. These include tales that have their central characters from Hindu mythology such as the story of *Babruvahan* and *Arjuna* and *Ulapi*, in relation to Babbor, the ancient capital of Dogras or the story about the killing of *Suddha Rakshasha* or story about sending for a *Baid* (Hindi-Vaidya), when Ravana fell ill<sup>70</sup>.

Then follows the category of tales of mystery and adventure that have characters like fairies, princesses and devils. Folk-tales of *Rupa Basant* and *Koohn-Shehzadi*, are full of suspense and thrill and get a new dimension with characters like *Tota* and *Maina* helping the hero or heroine. The third type is that of parables: Folk tales where birds and animals are the main characters and who think and behave like human beings. Such stories usually point at certain



moral or practical wisdom. *Mirag Te Gidd* (The Deer and the Vulture), *Shere Da Dil* (Loin's Heart), *Pakkharu di Sikkh* (The Teaching of the Bird) are the folk-tales of this category.

There are tales that are full of humor and satire. Few examples of such folk-tales are 'Mind your own business and enjoy a wholesome meal', (*Nakkeai di Seeda Jayaaan te Saag Toda Khaeyaan*), 'Rani Khan's Brother-in law' (*Rani Khan da Sala*), 'Lazy Family' (*Aalasi Tabbar*) etc. Tales that revolve around social problems such as untouchability, folk customs and folk superstitions constitute another category. In such folk-tales, there are animosities and bickering between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law or between co-wives or sisters-in-law. Few examples of Dogri folk-tales of this genre are Jasmine Flower (*Chameli da Phull*), Lazy Son (*Aalasi Puttar*), and the Stole/ *Odunu*). Another group of folk tales are those about saints and deities such as *Baba Pehad*, *Siddha Gouriya*, *Mata Vaishno Devi*, *Bava Surgal*, *Bhairo*, *Kaliveer*, *Bava Ranu* and *Bava Jitto*. Such characters are venerated by folk communities and have a strong impact on the minds of the people. Folk tale of Bava Jitto is a good example of a common farmer who sacrificed his life as a protest against injustice<sup>71</sup>.

### 3. Folk Songs of Jammu

Folk songs of Jammu which are a storehouse of local culture, beliefs and social structure and responses to historical changes are great verbal performances of high artistic value. These songs are distinct from those of the bards as they present experiences ranging from mundane to extraordinary, material to mystical, disparaging to joyful, from birth to death.



Having a distinct style, context, social occasion and function, most types of folk songs of Jammu are sung in a variety of performative contexts (with or without dance, in a group or solo). Songs are sung for specific rituals, worship of folk deities, eulogizing bravery of folk heroes and then there are the specific songs of Jammu's many festivals. No specialized instruments accompany folk songs.

Typically the women folk songs are accompanied by domestic utensils, *chimta*, clay pots, or *dholak*—the hand drum. In folk-songs, one can find every aspect of Dogra life—from love to heroism and sacrifice. These songs are innumerable and have many forms. The songs sung on the various occasions have different names. Common types of Dogri folk-songs are:

#### 4. Sanskar Geet

Ritual or ceremonial songs are sung by women usually at the time of the birth of a child, marriage of a son or a daughter or at the death of a near and dear one. These ritual songs can be further classified into three types:

**4. A) Bihayian & Badahavae:** The songs sung before and after the birth of a male child are called *Bihayian* and *Badahavae*. Other than at birth of a child, these songs are also sung on birth-days of male babies and ceremonies like *Ritaan* and *Sutra*.

Contents of bihayi songs change according to nature of the ceremony. For instance in a bihayi sung during *ritaan*, the woman requests her husband to provide her expensive things to beautify herself and to which the husband replies in affirmative. Example: (Women) /*Aie Lohra* (Lahore) *Da*



*Kanghi Mangaie De Se, Tun Nuaie De Se, Gori Mangdi Aie/* Gori requests you to get a comb from Lahore/ (Man) *Mangaie Dinna, Nuaie Dinna, Tun Utth Sir Gundiae Boue, Kainta Diyae Ladaliye/* Surely I shall get it for you, you start undoing your hair, Oh my dearest/<sup>72</sup>.

While the *bihayi* sung at the birth of male child reflects the sentiments of a jubilant mother who compares her newly born to Lord Krishna, there are others reflecting her excitement at sending the joyful messages to her parental home.

## 5. Marriage Songs

Folk songs sung at time of marriage are of two categories: *Ghorhian* and *Soahag*, which are sung at the homes of bridegroom and bride respectively. These folk songs sung by women folk of both houses of marriage mark the auspicious beginning of a number of a common ceremonies such as like *Ganddhiyan*, early morning cooking of *Babroos* on day of *Saant*, application of *Butna* and ritual bath, receiving of *Tamol* and also exclusive ceremonies which are observed according to customs and traditions of both families.

**5.A. Ghodiyaan:** The *Ghodhiyan* songs are sung by bridegroom's sisters and sisters and other women at house of marriage. *Ghodhiyaan* are sung during rituals and ceremonies which are centered around the bridegroom on the day of marriage such as ceremonial bath, dressing up in elegant dress and mounting the horse. Example of a Gohri song: */Saanti Bhaethe Laare Gi Garmi Aayi/ Pakkha Chohlae Naai, Belaan Dindi maayi/ Sehraa Laande Laare Gi Garmi Aayi/Pakkha Chohlae Naai, Belaan Dindi Maayil*



While sitting in the *Saant* ceremony, the groom is feeling flushed/ Barber is refreshing him, with hand-held fan/ Mother is busy in giving alms/ While tying Sehra, the groom is feeling flushed/ Barber is refreshing him, with hand-held fan/Mother is busy in giving alms/.

**5.B. Soahag:** *Soahag*, the counterpart of *Ghorhian*, are nuptial songs about the *Soahagi* (bride). In one variety of *Soahag*, the would-be-bride addresses her father, mother, sisters, aunts, uncles, brothers and cousins to express a gamut of emotions like fond memories of family love and happiness, anxious expectations of a suitable match and the nature of in-laws, the worries about arrangement of the dowry and sadness of imminent separation and departure from parental home.

In *Soahag* songs, every bride is addressed as Sita and the groom as Ram and girl's father as Raja Janak. Example of a *Soahag* song: *Mere Babal Ji, Bedi Ch Boldae N Totae, Tus Bolde Ki Neyin/ Mere Babal Ji, Hoon Ni Aakho Dhi Saari, Mein Hoe Aan Parail/* Oh my father, parrots are squawking in Vedi, why are you so quiet/Oh my father, here after you can't address me 'your daughter', as now I am a stranger belonging to someone else\.

**5.C. Sitthnian:** These are songs of jesting sung before a wedding by the women and girls of the bride's side. They address the groom's approaching marriage party. The songs express the mixed sentiments of women folk who are going to miss one of their friends to bridegroom and his family, along with some pointed dart. Example of a *Sitthni* song: */ Aaayi Ja Jia Aayi Jaa, Tugee Lohe Da Kamm Sakhayi*



*Daiche/ Teri Maau Di Bani Jaa Rail Gaddi, Tere Bapu Da Injin Banai Daiche/* Come, oh dear come, Let us teach you skills of smithy / Let your mother become a rail, and we make an engine out of your father/.

**5.D. Chhand:** Chhand songs, a form of limerick, are sung when women of the bride's group take the groom inside the house after solemnizing the marriage, where the bridegroom meets bridegroom's friends and sisters after the ceremony. They demand that he should sing Chhand. The bridegroom then sings songs which are generally in praise of his in-laws. Example of a Chhand: */Chhand Paragai Aao, Chhandaa Aggein Kesar, Sass Meri ai Parbati Te Souhra Mera Parmeshar/*.

## 6. Loaniyan, Palla, Kotal (*Folk Songs on the occasion of Death*)

Certain folk songs are sung on the occasion of death. One called Loanyian is generally performed during the ritual of *siapa*, where women gather in a circle or stand facing each other and beat their foreheads, breasts and thighs in mourning. The other form of mourning songs is *Palla*. This two-liner song is sung in a long and slow dirge-like movement, laying stress on two words to the accompaniment of sobbing and weeping. Two women sing this song while putting their heads together and covering them with a veil. The two genres of bereavement songs are intensely emotional outbursts expressing the loss in social relations created by the departed person's unfulfilled social responsibilities. The third type, almost extinct now, is *Kotal*. Full of humor and mirth, these songs are sung at the death of a very old elder who has a large extended family.



## 7. Festival Songs

There are many songs connected with festivals like *Holi*, *Lohri*, *Naraatey*. Male groups sing *Holi* songs, where as *Naraatey* songs are sung by female groups. Only *Lohri* songs are sung by boys and girls in separate groups. Groups of boys and girls go from door to door and sing *Lohri* songs and collect fuel and money for celebrating the festival. They take *Badayiaan* from the families, who are celebrating *Lohri* for their newly born male child or the marriage of their son. Followings are the songs sung by male and female group: The popular /*Lohri* song sung by boys is: *Airni Bhai Airni, Airni/Putthi Chakki Pherni, Airni/ or Kotaie Par Sutto Salai Ji, Phalaane Di karo Kurmai Ji/*.

Some folk songs are also connected with local fairs like *Suddhi Da Mela* (Mela of Sudhamahadev), *Uttarbehni Da Mela*. Local folk-singers sing these songs at the above places with great devotion and faith.

## 8. Bhakti Songs

There are a variety of songs in this category. Regarded as devotional folk songs, they are as under: 1) *Bishanpataie* 2) *Bhajan* 3) *Bheintaan* 4) *Aaarti* 5) *Gujri*.

*Bishanpataie* and *Bhajan* are connected with the praise of God are similar in rhyme and theme. Whereas *Bheintaan* focus on the goddesses and lay more stress on their mythical nature. *Bheintaan* are also called votive songs, which are chanted by the professionals to raise some means of living. *Aartis* are devotional hymns. In Dogri folk songs, there are very popular *aartis* of *Lord Shiva*, *Devi Bhagwati*, *Lakshmi Narayan*. *Gujri* is a type of folk-song concerned with *Krishna Lila*. Few examples of these folk songs are:



*Bishenpattaie: Tera Bhed Kusai Ni Paaya, Mere Bhagwaan Ji/Baagein Ch Tuppi Aayi, Malli Sha Puchhi Aayi, Phullein Ch Chhappi Reh Bhagvan, Mere Bhagvan Ji/.*

*Bheint: Jotaan Jagadiyaan Darbar, Mata Rani De Darbar, Jotaan Jagdiyaan Ji/. Aarti: Pehli Aarti Duee Seva, Ji Gaaeo Mei Mayiaa Ji Di aarti, Kannein Singhe Da Mela, Chowkidarein Da Bailla, Jodidarein Da Bailla, Jai Devi/.*

## 9. Seasonal Songs

There are three types of seasonal folk-songs in Dogri. They are called *Chhinjaan*, *Rittriyaan* and *Dholru*. These songs are sung by wandering minstrels who go from house to house to announce the name of a new month of *Vikrami Samvat* by singing these folk-songs and beating drum. But *Chhinjaan* songs are usually sung at the places of folk deities on the occasion of Chhinj, wrestling fairs. There is one more type of folk-songs associated with description of the seasons in twelve months. This is called *Baramah*. In such songs emotional state of females, whose husbands are separated from them for earning, is described in a touching manner. Welcoming the new-year in month of *Chait*, the group of songs are sung by professional singers on the beats of drums called *Dohlru*. Few examples of *Dohlru* songs are as under: *Deyaan Mai Mera Odnu, Kannein Godnu, Mein Maruaa Guddan Jana, Bhala Ji, Mein Maruaa Guddan Jana, Lobhi Maruae Da/O* mother, please give me my *dupatta* and digging instrument, I want to go to dig the land/. These songs proceed with the demand of other tools used by the farming community.

Folk songs sung during various seasons are mostly a kind of separation songs, sung by the females for their lovers or husbands. Few examples are as under: *Seliyaan Dharaan*



*Poun Phuaraan, Mera Reshmi Cheera Sajjaeo, Cheerai Gi Dhoni Aan, Chham Chham Roni Aan, Sajjan Pardes Ki Toreyal*. In this song, the lady is remembering her lover, who is not with her at this pleasant moment. She has sent him to a far off land to earn his bread. The rain falling on the green hills is creating an environment for her to miss him. /*Jammu Di Kandiyaa Barkha Laggi Di, Te Dharein Pavae De Paalae, O Shoukiya Chamba Deyaal*. This is the song connected with winter season, the male prefers to go to Chamba, where as the female is convincing him that the winter season of Jammu is also very charming and pleasant. So there is no justification for visiting Chamba.

## 10. Workers' Songs

The folk songs which are sung by groups of workers at their work places include *Soaari*, *Garloddi*, *Laaddi*. These songs are designed to lighten the efforts of labour by providing rhythm to regulate group's breathing and also to instill energy and enthusiasm into workers to complete the work in hand. The songs sung in the fields while digging, harvesting the crop and are called as *Soaari*. While those sung during cutting/felling of large trees in jungles, moving/shifting/loading of big logs of wood or huge boulders are known as *Garloddi*. The folk songs which are sung while putting a roof over a house are called as *Laddi*. In these songs two persons sing a *boli* and the rest in the group give a reply. It is customary that the family which invites volunteers for a particular job, also serves the group wholesome refreshments. Example of a worker's song: *Mere Gashiya Varira Ho—Hainso/Joka Kutthein Tera Dera Ho—Hainso/Mera Dera Kashmiri Ho—Hainso*<sup>73</sup>.



## 11. Play Songs, Cradle Songs, and Miscellaneous Songs

*Play Songs* are connected with children and their plays. Sung by the boys and girls separately, these songs help children decide their teams and turns (*puhgana*). There are so many games in which singing a song is a must for every player like *Kikali*/, *Kokala Shaapaki*.

### *Cradle Songs:*

Cradle songs are of two types. First there are *Lorian*, the lullabies, i.e., songs that are prominently sound structured and sung in monotone to soothe the child to sleep. In this type the lines are very short and the theme is quite simple, mostly simple things of child life. Another type is of songs expressing a mother's love touched with imaginative sentiments such as hopes and fears for their infants. In this type, the lines are slightly long, musicality complex and the language a little more refined. One such Dogri *lori* written by well known Dogri poetess and sung by legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar, in 1970s and broadcast from the radio has become very popular. The cradle songs, besides being sung by Dogra women, are also related to the life of women inasmuch as they are to the life of the child.

*Miscellaneous Songs:* The joint family is the basic unit of Dogra life and there are many folk-songs which deal with the life of a bride at her father-in-law's house, her life at her parents' house, mutual feelings between the daughter-in-law and the mother-in-law, between bride and her husband's sister, between brothers and sisters, between mother and son and between husband and wife. There are folk-songs which contain the feelings of every human being's love, hatred, affection and anger.



## 12. Love Songs

Love songs are most popular in Dogri. They are of two types namely meeting songs and parting songs. Meeting folk songs are less in number in comparison to parting folk songs. Historically Dogra young men's predilection for military service would also lead to their long absence from home. Love songs of Gaddis are heard in the upper ranges of Dhaula Dhar, upper parts of Kangra and some parts of Chamba. Love songs of Sajjan and Sajjani are sung in Kishtawar, Padar and on the banks of river Chenab.

## 13. Folk-Ballads

Called locally as *Lok Gatha*, these are long narrative poems which are recited as well as sung. "A very rich tradition of folk ballads developed in India during the late medieval period. A Ballad is not generally an element of tribal culture though it is very common with the folk culture of almost every region of the country<sup>74</sup>. However because of historical reasons, the regions like (Jammu) Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan and Bengal are particularly rich in this aspect of folk literature"<sup>75</sup>.

Folk Ballads are generally classified in two categories: a) historical b) legendary, but the ballads of Assam have a distinct category of imaginative ballads.

In Dogri oral tradition, folk singers classify the long poems they sing into two groups: *Karkaan* and *Baraan*. *Karaks* are sung by *Jogis* or *Gardis*. *Jogis* are house-holder *Nath panthis* (followers of *Nath* sect) and are considered as Brahmins. They sing their ballads with a folk instrument called *King* or *Chakara*. *Gardis* are from schedule castes and their accompanying instrument is the drum. *Gardis* are



descended from *Garudi*, a community of experts who cured snake bite with certain mantras.

*Baars* are usually sung by *Dares* (derived from *Darvesh*—wandering faqirs) who were followers of Islam. The heroes of *Baars* were mostly Hindu warriors. With the partition of the country in 1947, most of the *Dares* migrated to Pakistan. *Baars* are sung by *Jogis* and *Gardis*<sup>76</sup>.

#### 14. Karak

Called as *Karak* in Dogri, these are ballads with religious themes and are narrated in a chronological manner according to the chain of incidents in the lives of gods, goddesses, folk deities, saints and martyrs. "All the heroes in *karkaan* are personages of noble and elevated characters whose narration casts in the mind a bent of edifying solemnity. Any kind of flippancy or lightness of attitude after the ballad amounts to desecration and jar against the dignity of the occasion, for the Dogras ballads embody certain traditions of their history and culture. They represent the sacrosanct ideal of high virtues exemplified in their heroes and therefore must be approached with reverence"<sup>77</sup>.

*Karkaan* may partly be called panegyrics, eulogistic commentaries of noble minded persons who command reverence of the people for their blessed and edifying influence upon them. They have an undertone of didacticism and intensify the human qualities like sense of justice, piety, religious and moral fervour, spirit of sacrifice, and tend to apotheosize their heroes<sup>78</sup>. The *Karakaan* have been further categorized in three major groups<sup>79</sup>.



#### 14. A. *Types of Karakaan:*

- (a) *Puranic Ballads*: These ballads dealing with Brahmanical gods and goddesses largely centre on stories of Shiv-Parvati, their marriage and magic rituals associated with Lord Shiva. They also contain ballads concerning goddesses such as *Vaishno Devi*, *Sheetala Devi* and *Naga deities*. It would not be out of place to mention that Parvati is considered as daughter of the land and as such Shiva is the son-in-law of the region. Most of the local gods and goddesses are considered as incarnation of *Lord Shiva and Parvati*<sup>80</sup>.
- (b) *Ballads of Folk Deities*: The second category of *karakaan* include stories of folk deities like *Raja Mandleek*, *Kali Beer*, and *Narsimha*. This group includes invariably the family deities, Naga deities, village deities who over a period of time acquired the status of folk deities<sup>81</sup>.
- (c) *Ballads of Family Deities*: The ballads connected with family or lineage deities popularly known as *kul devis* and *kul devtas* form the third major category within the *karakaan*, for example, the ballads connected with *Bava Jitto*, *Bava Ranpat*, *Bava Pohto*, *Bava Ambo*, *Data Leekho*, *Data Bhalla*, and *Datis (kul devis)* like *Bua Kauri*, *Bua Banga*, *Bua Amro*. As stated earlier, some of them have attained the status of folk deities<sup>82</sup>.

#### 15. Baraan

The second form of ballad prevalent in Jammu region is called as *Baar*. *Baar* is the corrupt form of Hindi word *Bir* which means brave and chivalrous. Since these ballads treat the theme of prowess and adventure, they are called *Baraan*



or the ballads of heroism<sup>83</sup>.

According to Dr Om Goswami, the word *Baar* appears to be derived from Din-Bar which is a ritual observed in the memory of the deceased. *Baar* also denotes the day of the week or cycle of time. *Baar* is a long narrative poem showing the chronology of a person's life cycle.

*Baraan* are usually stirring and weave a halo of undaunted valour around the characters which grip the heart of the listener and arouse the feeling of hero worship<sup>84</sup>. Mostly these ballads containing detailed accounts of the valor, courage, sacrifice and skill in the battlefield of renowned heroes are sung on occasions of fairs and festivals.

The number of ballads (*karkaan* and *baraan*) in Dogri is fairly large. Even the ballads themselves are of great length. A Dogri ballad of average size will go over at least fifty pages of close print. It is not wrong to call them diminutive forms of epic. But they do not bear any resemblance to epic in their technique. Almost every ballad starts with some sort of prayer and invocation to God and on an occasional supplication for divine help in between the action. But they also appeal to our sense of mystery vis-à-vis the ways of God<sup>85</sup>.

*Draes*, the hereditary minstrels not only created these *baraan* in the past but also have been singing them since generations.

There are three main types of *baars* in Dogri: a) *Viragatha* or ballads of deeds like those of *Raja Jagata*, *Zorawar Singh*, *Mian Dido* and *Ram Singh Pathania*, *Jarnail Baaz Singh*. b) *Premgatha*—ballads of love like that of *Dhol Badhsah*. c) *Shokgahta*—ballad of sorrow like those of *Mahru Dava* and *Maharaja Pratap Singh*<sup>86</sup>. The other popular *baars* are of



*Raja Gopichand, Raja Brathari, Mandalik and Jaimal Fatta.* Some scholars have divided *baars* into: Historical, Yogic and Love Ballads.

(a) **Historical Ballads:** The historical ballads refer to the narratives that extol the bravery of warriors who at some time of historical period showed military prowess and chivalry. However these ballads have been documented only the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards<sup>87</sup>.

(b) **Yogic Ballads:** They contain the stories of various people who came under the influence of *Nath Pantis* and became *yogis*. They belonged to every strata of society—rulers, royal persons and common folk. Reference may be made here to the ballads relating to *Brihathari, Raja Gopichand, Baba Pir Charangnath* and *Raja Hodi*<sup>88</sup>.

(c) **Love Ballads:** Love ballads are those relating to *Kunju Chanchalo, Sunni-Bhukhu, Mira-Julahi*. However love ballads are very few in number as compared to ballads in other groups. The explanation probably lies in the fact that the region was more under the influence of *Nath Panthis* where woman is considered as a hindrance in the achievement of the Ultimate. Moreover, ballads were largely sung by *Gardis* and *Dares* who were more concerned with religious singing<sup>89</sup>.

## 16. Phalonian (Folk-Riddles)<sup>90</sup>

Folk-riddles are called *phalonian* in Dogri. These riddles occupy an important place in the life of the Dogra



community. Only a few years back, it was a common practice for elders to pose these riddles to children usually at night. The children tried to find out the answers. "These were the costless mode of entertainment and knowledge for the folk and it also stimulated the imagination"<sup>91</sup>.

There is a variety of themes associated with riddles. They can be classified into following subjects: Riddles relating with folk-life: */Jinni Milae Unni ge Kha: Phi Bbi O'di Puhkh Nain Ja\*-Chakki-Grinding Stone.

**Riddles relating with farming and agriculture:** */Babbei Puttre Da Ikkae Naa:Babb Roundaha Ikkae Thaan : Puttar Phirda Gran Gran\*-Mango tree and Mango fruit.

Riddles relating with insects, birds and animals: */Inni Haari Kuri: Raje Nein Pahtt Khandi\*-Makkhi/-Fly.

**Riddles relating with the parts of the body:** *Maraan Ikk Bajjan Panj\*Hatth-Hand

Riddles relating with nature: *Kali Kambli Till Baddhe: Dinaein Goaache Rattien Labbhel Nehra, Amber te tare*-Darkness, Sky and Stars.

**Riddles relating with mythology:** *Ikk Shakari Shakaar Chadeiya, Naa Aoudha Chand, Jis Gi Solah Bihiaan Dand\* Ram and Ravan.

**Riddles relating with domestic articles:** *Olani Molani, Droajae Ch kholani\* Nukk-Sandal<sup>92</sup>.



## 17. Idioms

Dogri idioms and proverbs form a very important element of Dogri folk-literature. The primary aim of these was to perpetuate the cumulative experience and wisdom of the society for the benefit of coming generations<sup>93</sup>. These were aimed at making a person wiser in dealing with day to day affairs. A person having a fair knowledge of these sayings was considered as wise and experienced. Besides being treasuries of suitable and effective use of language, these are also storehouses of information and knowledge about Dogra life, their practical wisdom, thinking and beliefs.

About six thousand Dogri idioms have been collected and published by Tara Smailpuri. A few chief characteristics of Dogri idioms are as under: 1) A large number of idioms are connected with parts of human body, such as *hirda* (heart), *gala* (neck), *kann* (ear), *dende* (teeth), *sir* (head), *mann* (mind), *akkh* (eye) and objects of daily use such as *sheesha* (mirror). 2) Others are connected with nature like *suraj* (sun), *chann* (moon), *tare* (stars), *ba'h* (air), *amber* (sky). 3) A few idioms have more than one meaning e.g. *Gall Laani* means both - to start a topic and to taunt. 4) A few idioms, very much alike in construction, change their meanings with change in one or two words. Such as: *Naa Rakkhna* means to put a price. *Naa Rakkhi Lenaa* means to preserve honour. *Naa Raei Jana* means to remain in name only. 5) Some idioms retain the same meaning even after change of a word or two. such as: *Naas Karna*, *Naas Maarna*, *Naas Pattna*—all mean the same thing that is to destroy 6) Some idioms change their meanings when they are used in plural, such as *Nazar Phattni* means to get dazed on seeing



from a great height. *Nazraan Phati Jaaniyan* means to go to one's head<sup>94</sup>.

## 18. Proverbs

Called as *khoaan* in Dogri, proverbs have the quality of saying much in the fewest words. Dogri proverbs can be classified as under: 1) Containing the philosophy of life: *Dende Gai Suaad Geya, Akkhan Geyiaan Jahaan Geyal* Loss of teeth is loss of taste, Loss of eyes is loss of the world/, *Budda Chalda Ravae te Loha, Baeie ja Taan Goaa, Laeitie jaa Taan Moya* /An old man who walks is like iron, the one who sits all the time is about to say good bye, the one who lies down, is awaiting death/. 2) Exhibiting close connection of religion and mythology with the daily life of the people: *Khane Gi Chaturbhuj te Kammae Gi Jagananth*. 3) Containing morals: *Ik Chhada Ikla, Jamat Karamat*. 3-Containing the essence of experience: *Barsaati Savae te Siyalae Rovae*/Those who do not work during rainy season, suffer difficulties in winter season/. 5-Containing witty and satirical comments: *Syaana Kaan Tehra Par Bounda*/Those who think themselves as wise often make worst decisions/. 6) Containing the comments on caste system: *Jatt Mukkadam, Brehman Shah, Baniyaan Hakim, Kehar Khuda*/ In case a *Jatt* becomes a supervisor, a Brahmin as a businessman and a trader as a *Hakim*, then God can only save common folks/. 7) Containing the information of changing seasons: *Jinna Kaddai, Unna Bareh or Milkeyaa Taan Khiskeyaa, Gudkeyaa Taan Chhudkeyaa*/ the more hot the summers the more plentiful the rains/ Clouds with lighting are sure to move away/ the moment clouds thunder, downpour follows/.



### 8) Containing the information of agricultural activities:

*Jindai Kol Daanae, Undai Kamle Bi Siyaane or Uttam Kheti Maddham Bpar, Nikhiddh Chaakri, Bhikkh Doaar or Barreya Maggar, Rajjey Tabbar/* Even the imbeciles of moneyed families are considered as wise./Farming is best, trading medium, worst is service which leads to penury/Rain in Maggar/ Belly full grains for the family/<sup>95</sup>.



# Folk Religious Practice

## 1. Introduction

Folk and tribal religion remains the predominant mode for religious expression for rural, hill and highland communities of Jammu region. These age old sets of beliefs and practices lie outside the official doctrine and practices and are distinguished from 'high' forms of Hindu philosophy, mysticism and asceticism.

One of the conspicuous features of folk religion is polytheistic and sometimes animistic religion that lays emphasis on the locality and community and caste-specific celebrations or forms of worship. It remains as part of public memory through countless oral texts in local languages. Folk religion is characterized by a realistic attitude towards powerful forces and beings for the satisfaction of worldly needs. Deities are treated like human beings and supposed to behave in worldly manner. Disregard can provoke the anger of a deity while respect and devotion can appease him.

Folk religion includes many features of nature worship and ancestor worship without recognizing any contradictions in beliefs and practices associated with different deities. The structure of folk religion being open and unifying, a particular deity may show a unique combination of elements of different religious traditions. All religious saints, gurus, heroes are usually adopted into the folk tradition, by attributing powers to them. Thus, a religious reformer or hero may transform into a powerful deity with the growing popular association of some pragmatic functions with his powers<sup>96</sup>.

In a village or among a sub-caste the *kula-devta's* or



*gram-devta's* myths of origin are linked with places of worship and their own pantheon, which unusually include spirits and deified heroes. Humans can often be possessed by these gods or spirits. From a high religious point of view, the forms of worship are considered as impure in many cases. Despite rapid urbanization, folk culture continues to remain the mainstay as well as defining element of the identity of people of Jammu region. Known for caste-inclusive celebrations or forms of worship, most communities of Duggar also worship regional deities.

## 2. Folk Deities

The supernatural entities that are worshipped and given offerings in Jammu include: a) Ancestors b) Guardian spirits c) Disease controllers etc. Unlike Brahmanical gods and goddesses worshipped at pan-India level, the folk and local deities are associated with specific places, fields, streams and are specific to caste-group or extended family, neighborhood, and village. These are worshipped for pragmatic/practical-purposes and ends such as fertility, good harvest, good weather and cure from diseases.

Folk deities are taken as having human personalities imbued with negative and positive sides. They may be impatient, ill-tempered, impulsive, lustful, greedy, and angry, as well as merciful and benevolent to their worshippers. Sometimes they are jealous gods, who get angry if they are neglected or if their devotees pay more attention to other deities.

Folk gods and goddesses can be shape-shifters, appearing as natural objects at one time and as human beings at another. Folk deities have supernatural powers and appear in various



figures like nature spirits, ghosts, ancestors etc. Local gods and goddesses are worshiped by non-Brahmin priests and people of any caste or social status.

In folk Hinduism, goddesses are particularly important. These goddesses tend to be aniconic<sup>97</sup>. She might manifest (appear) herself in a stone (*pindi*), in a lake, an unusual tree, or a pile of earth or cow dung or live within nature, without a sculpted human form (opposite to mainstream Hindu tendency). In hilly areas many folk goddesses are worshiped by local communities as *joganis* and *dhakanis*.

Jammu region abounds in such folk deities and people irrespective of caste and creed pay homage and seek their blessings as no ritual or ceremony is performed without having first venerated them. So on special family occasions like mundan ceremonies of children, before and after a marriage in the family, all members visit the shrine of the deity. The other occasions are the *meils* which are annual community congregations\ gatherings of people of same sub-caste (same *gotra*) to pay obeisance to their common *kul-devtas* at their worship sites: *dehries/dehras* —memorial shrine or at annual *bhandaras* (community lunch).

### 3. Types of Folk Deities

More than four hundred deities exist in Jammu region. Tracing their origin to aboriginal or tribal culture and finding their mention in folk lore and literature, these local deities continue to maintain their independent existence. Many of them have attained the status of folk and regional deities on account of prominence and the reverence given in the whole of the region. In each sub-region of Jammu they exhibit their own peculiarities depending upon the socio-cultural and



physiographical conditions of the region<sup>98</sup>.

The folk deities fall into broad categories like *gram devtas*, (village deities) *kul devtas* and *devis* (family/clan/lineage deities), *naga devtas*, *shaheed devtas*, *shilavantis*, and *aagat devtas* (exotic deities). No ritual, ceremony or family function like birth and marriage is considered complete without taking the blessings of clan, local and village deities.

#### 4. Gram/Kul Devta

Village gods are a part of life and it is a common belief that without the permission of the deity nothing can happen in the village. Many a time *gram devtas* or place deities and *kul* (ancestor) *devtas* are the same. That means a folk deity in addition to being a *devta* of the entire village can also be a *kul-devta* of a particular sub-caste. Worship of a common folk deity knits together the people into a kind of ritual relationship. The sphere of these deities is very large and their blessing is sought for help in farming, protection of crops and cattle wealth and freedom from diseases. The spirit of the deity speaks through the oracle (medium), who, while in trance, represents the deity and replies the queries of the devotees. Some of the *Puranic devtas* worshipped as folk deities are *Mahakaal*, *Narsingha* and *Hanuman*. Some of the famous village deities are *Bhihn Devta*, *Chraina Devta*, *Siar Devta*, *Masal Devta*, *Mandora Devta*, *Bansul Devta*, *Khair Devta*, *Kail Naga Devta*.

#### 5. Nag Devta

The *naga devtas* are another category of folk deities worshiped by communities of Duggar. The widely prevalent



cult of *naga devtas* is linked with rule of Naga dynasties in Jammu region in its distant past.

This hypothesis other than literary references is also supported by archaeological evidence which has come from Shiva Temple at Suddhamahadev where the Brahmi inscription on a huge trident records it as a gift of *Naga King Vibhu Naga*, son of *Ganpati Naga*, who is supposed to have ruled during 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> CE.

The number of shrines dedicated to *naga* deities seems to be vestiges of ancient religious practices of *Naga* race, albeit now transformed and absorbed into folk religion in form of local deities. Some of the well known *naga* deities are *Raja Basak*, *Bhed Devta*, *Bhurdar Devta*, son of *Basak Nag*, *Tansar Devta*, *Mansar Devta*, *Guha Devta*, *Bola Devta*, *Kai Devta*, *Laundana Devta*. *Nag devtas* are also family deities of many castes.

## 6. Shaheed Devta

This category of folk deities relates to *shaheeds*—martyrs: those ordinary folk, men and women, who resorted to self-sacrifice as a mark of protest against injustice or for a social cause and thus died an untimely death and many a times a violent death.

In course of time, many such folk heroes, heroines—for their extra ordinary circumstances of death and subsequent association of supernatural powers with them—stand consecrated as *kul devtas/devis* or even village gods. In such cases, if the martyr is a male, he is called a *shaheed*, *data* or *bava*. In case of a woman martyr, she is called as *siyabati*, *sajawati*, *sheelvanti* or *dati*. An unmarried young male Brahmin is called *Barhamdeo*.



Almost all such martyrs and a large number of folk deities have the *karaks* (ballads) composed in their honour by unknown folk poets: *jogis* or *gardis*. Such *karaks* are sung to propitiate the folk deities and martyrs who through their powers and reach, control and affect the worldly affairs. The singing of such ballads by *jogis* and *gardis* is done at all the shrines of concerned gods and goddesses and at the *dehriś/dehriś* (memorials) of the martyrs during annual congregations (*meil*) and on sacred days and functions. Followed by *Baba Jitto*, the other famous *shaheed devtas* in this category are *Data Ranpat*, *Bava Indo*, *Bava Ambo*, *Bava Tholu*, *Data Likho*, *Data Hallo*, *Bava Pohto* and many more. In fact almost all Dogra communities' *kul devtas* are invariably martyrs.

## 7. Aagat Devta

Due to Jammu's strategic geographical position as a meeting point of the northern plains of Punjab and the foothills of Himalayas, many tribes, communities, and families from other parts of the country after migrating from their homelands because of wars, armed conflicts, drought, epidemics, etc. have been seeking shelter and settling in the Jammu areas

Many deities of such outside groups of migrants, on account of a natural process of assimilation and acculturation, today stand interwoven into the folk religious fabric of Duggar—along with prominent personalities of religious movements and cults like *Siddha* and *Natha*.

Such folk deities are called as *aagat devtas*. Some of the popular *aagat devatas* of Duggar who are worshipped by many communities and have their shrines at a number



of places are: *Raja Mandalik, Kaliveer, Guru Gorakhnath, Chourasi Siddha, Nou Nath, Siddha Gouriya, Siddha Baba Pir Charan Nath, Siddha Kapala, Siddha Garibnath, Siddha Rupanath* etc.

## 8. Shrine/Temples/Mandi/Banie/ Site Selection

In Jammu region, shrines and temples of folk deities are of two kinds; *shikhra* type and form of a *dehra/dehri*. The *shikhra* type folk shrines follow popular pyramidal form of the Indian temple architecture and are either built in wood, brick or stone. Shrines made in wood are mostly found in upper reaches of the region. Their walls and roofs are made of wood and spires are mounted by an umbrella shaped structure. Door jambs, pillars and outer walls of such shrines are carved with floral, geometric designs and figures. The *garbha grhas* (cella) also support carved ceilings. The height of such wooden temples can be between five to fifteen meters. These wooden structures are normally renovated after every few decades to replace the withered. With the result the quality of wood carvings by next generation of folk artists although maintaining general order of iconography of subject matter, tends to change in the overall style of execution.

### *Site Selection:*

The selection of a site for building a shrine is done as per wish of the deity which is known through communion with the *devta* by a *pujari, doala* or *nishanchi*. Normally, such shrines are built on a hill/mountain top, amidst a thick forest or near a water source. Such shrines generally have open grounds around them so that large number of people can gather.



## 9. Marri

*Marri* is a small structure which is shaped like a temple, *mutth*, *manadapa* or a hut dedicated to the folk deity. In Duggar *marri* also means an open space. In mountain villages, a *chabutra* (platform) of large wooden logs is made and idols of *lok devta* are placed on it. The places where the idols of deities are kept in open under a tree are also called as *marri*.

**9 A. Mandi:** *Marri* and *mandi* are taken as synonyms in some places of Duggar. *Mandi* is a *dehra* like place where the *jhunde* (metal chains, tongs) of the *devtas* are kept. In some places the *devta's* *dehras* and *mandis* are separate. While in a *dehra*, the idol of the *devta* is housed, in the *mandi*, the *jhunde*, more *pankh*, and *dhol* are kept. The *devta's* *pujari* generally treats the devotees suffering from ailments and other maladies with *jhaad phoonk* (black magic, sorcery) in the *mandi* only.

**9 B. Banie (Forest Grove):** A *dehra* of folk deity in hilly areas of Duggar is mostly located amidst a thick cluster of trees with *baolies* (fresh water springs). Such a place is called as *banie*. The deity is considered as owner and guardian of the spot. No one is allowed to cut the trees, take away the wood, grass, leaves from here. It is a well known folk belief that anyone who does so, suffers from the wrath of the *devta*. This belief had till recent times played an important role in preservation of such tree clusters.

**9 C. Sthan:** Certain spots or places which get associated with a *devta* are called as its *sthan* (residing place). Here the



presence of the deity is in the shape of *devta's* objects like *jhunde* etc., which are kept on a kind of platform. It could be an open air shrine under a tree, on a platform.

## 10. Idols of Folk Deities

As a practice, the indigenous idols of folk deities are made of stone or wood. Mostly made of the wood of *Deodar* and *Khair*, such idols are fashioned by carpenters, who from the start of the carving and till the completion of the idol, keep a onetime fast and sleep on ground. Height of idols varies from half a meter to two meters. Many a time gold or silver leaves are used to put *tikka* (mark) on the forehead of the deity and even his/her eyes are made by use of silver/gold. Other symbols like sun, moon, elephant, horses, flying or coiled snakes and other animals are also found carved on the shrines.

**10 A. Mohra:** Idols of folk deities are locally called as *Mohras*. Such *mohras*, addressed with names of *Kul Devtas*, *Shaheeds* or *Shaheedanis* are made in gold, silver, iron, brass, copper and stone. Many a time such *mohras* are consecrated inside the premises of homes. After the *pran-pratishta* (infusing of life) ritual, such *mohras* are treated as living presences. Even the daughters-in-law of the house do not walk past the *devta's mohra* without covering their heads with a *dupatta* as per the prevalent practice of showing respect to elders.

**10 B. Simb:** The life size idols of *devtas* are called as *Simb* in the hilly areas of Duggar. It is a general practice that devotees of the *devta* promises (vows) to offer a *simb* if his/



her *sukkhan* or *mannat* (wish) is fulfilled by the grace of the *devta*. In case of the fulfillment of a wish, the devotee offers a newly made *simb* at the *devta*'s shrine. It is also believed that one who does not fulfill his vow is likely to suffer the wrath of the *devta*. *Simbs* are similar to the main idols but are considered as separate category of images.

## 11. Objects/Implements of the Deity

In *dehras*, temples and *sthans* (open or covered), a number of objects/implements of the folk deities are also kept. These include *jhunde* which are made of iron rod around which chains are tied. Since the deity is supposed to also reside in his *jhunde*, the sacredness of the object is maintained by earmarking a definite space within the shrine and by offering it regular worship.

Near the *jhunde* are placed deity's *gje*y (flags) and *trishul* (trident). In some places the *baan* or arrows of the *devta* are also kept. *Devta*'s *chowki* (seat), *chhattra* (parasol), and *more-phang* (Peacock feathers) are also placed. In some shrines a *dhol* (drum) is also kept. This *dhol* is exclusively used during the *puja* or at the time of *jaatar*. In some shrines *nagaras* (single side drums), *kaihl* (long trumpet like instrument) and *palaki* of the *devta* is also placed in the shrine.

## 12. Karkuns (Officials) of Devta

Amongst the *karkuns* of a *devta*, the *pujari* holds an important position. The *pujari* is called as *Pran* in the hilly belt of Duggar where they mostly belong to the *Thakur* caste. The job of a *pujari* is hereditary. He worships the deity as per the folk practice. He normally resides by the side of the



shrine only. In some areas *Harijans* are also the *pujaris* of such shrines.

In certain pockets, a new *pujari* is appointed after holding religious rituals and ceremonies. He is hid in a blanket and made to drink the blood of he-goat. It also devolves upon him to keep his hair and beard uncut. It is also believed that after a *devta* accepts someone as his *pujari*, the *devta* can enter into the *pujari's* body, who, then, as a medium has the power to make predictions. The subjects of such predictions generally relate to rains, natural calamities, well being of cattle and crops, personal or family problems of the devotees and so on. At such shrines there is no daily *puja*. The rural communities consider the priest as the main representative of the *devta*. He takes a part of the offerings received at the shrine. He also gets a share in the meat of animals sacrificed at the shrine.

### 13. Chela/Doala/Dyala

*Chela/Doala/Dyala* is the one who is selected by folk deity as his medium. There is only one *pujari* of a folk deity while *chelas/doalas* can be many. His primary duty is to do *seva* of the deity; which means to do *puja* on definite days and observe *chowki*. It devolves upon a *chela* to observe a certain way of life which includes sleeping on ground, chanting *devta's mantra*, cleaning and washing *devta's thara-platform*, implements like *soungals*—chains, *nishaniyaan*. Also called as *Devta Ka Gohda* i.e. the carrier of the deity, the *chela* is taken as the direct link to deity's spirit and considered to be the one who enjoys special favor with the deity. Whenever the spirit of the deity enters in him, he performs many miracles and superhuman feat like touching



his body with red hot iron rods. During the state of *jaatar* (trance), he strikes *jhunde* on his back or can even walk on fire. *Doala* helps people in removing the evil shadow of *bhoot* and *pret*, the ill effects of *jadu-tona* (magic, sorcery). He also prays for the welfare of people, makes predictions about the crops, and also communicates the wishes of the *devta*. He undertakes such curative actions in the *mandi* of the *devta*.

It is believed that a *doala* can also see beneath the ground and locate buried treasures etc. On the request of house owners, he, after some rituals, can help them to retrieve it. His help is also sought by sick persons to know about the cause of their diseases. Many *doalas* are also known to take meat and drink alcohol. The *chela* can belong to any caste. The title of the *chela* is not passed on from one generation to another as it is not acquired knowledge or technique.

#### 14. Kanniyaan (Kann Chhattna)

*Kann Chhattna* is an act of divination in which a person with this ability looks at the rice brought by the affected party and places in a *thali*, and tells them, the whereabouts of their home, their status, as well as the reason of their visit. Such a specialist performs *Kann Chhattna* while sitting at *devta*'s shrine in his house. People generally approach him in case of theft of animals, valuables or some other trouble. It is believed that such persons have a sort of *siddhi* (acquired para-normal/magical powers) with the help of which he is able to tell the names of thieves and even the directions to locate them, the name and cause of afflictions etc. The *pujaris* and *doalas* often exploit gullible folk and fleece them of money as well as gifts in kind. But there are also a few who serve society honestly.



## 15. Other Karkuns

Each cult and its associated shrine/shrines have ritual specialists. These specialists—priests, *chelas*, custodians usually have no authority in the cult. They are staunch followers and have certain expertise such as special knowledge of songs, stories and rites associated with the cult object, which they may place at the devotees' disposal.

**15. A. Jogi:** Jogi is a *charan* or servant of the *devta*. He is closely connected with the *devta*'s shrine. He plays *devta*'s *dhol* on special occasions of puja and sings *devta*'s *karaks*. He also plays *king* (the traditional musical instrument of a *jogi*). Some *jogis* also play *chakara* (string instrument). A *jogi* goes to the *sthan* of *devta* and plays *dhol*. This is called as *Jagaa Jagaan Jaana*. At the time of *jaatar*, the *jogi* sings *karaks* in praise of the *devta* and plays the *boles* (beats) of the *dhol* in such a manner that the entire atmosphere gets charged. Many a time the head of the animal sacrificed at the *sthan* is given to him.

In Kandi areas of Jammu *jogis/gardis* are *harijans* of *Doom (Domb)* sub-caste and also Muslims. Many Muslim *jogis* left for Pakistan after partition. But some families of *jogis* are still there in the Dansal area. This inherited profession is on the decline as younger generations in families of *jogis* find it difficult to sustain themselves and are opting for services in government and private sectors.

## 16. Gardi

The roles of *jogi* and *gardi* is interchangeable and both play important roles in worship of folk deities and ancestors. Conducting the *devta*'s rituals falls under the exclusive



domain of the *gardi*. The main work of *gardi* is *jaadujariyaan khadana*. Other areas where he renders services to the community is *hatya manaana* and *sthapana*—consecration of *devasthan*, *dehra* of the *kul devta*. He also conducts rituals related to *sukkhan*, *chadahwa*—offerings, and intercedes on behalf of devotees, prays to *devta* to accept the offerings and grant wishes like peace and prosperity in the family, robust health of cattle and abundant crop. *Gardi* is entitled for all the *daan* (alms) received at *thara* of the *devta*. *Gardis* also hold personal rituals related to their musical instruments like *dhol*, *king*, *sarangi* etc.

**16. A. Draes:** The word *draes*, which seems to be a derivation of word *darvesh*, is a Muslim folk poet/singer in Jammu region who mainly sings *baars*—the ballads of heroism, of warriors and heroes. They are also the chroniclers of local history and events especially the great battles fought by local rajas. Almost extinct, the *draes* were very close to royal families and respected for their profession. But in due course of time, they started singing in praise of their patrons. Generally illiterate and uneducated they were storehouse of oral history of places, events, especially those related to the lives of the feudal lords in whose praise they sang in royal courts, public gatherings etc. Mostly accompanying feudal lords in wars, battles, they inspired soldiers to sacrifice their lives for the sake of the motherland by renderings on *chakaraa* and singing of heroic ballads.

### 17. Nashanchi or Nashandar

Generally, the persons who carry the object/items related to the *devta* are called as *nashandar* or *nashanchi*. But in



Duggar region, *nashanchi* is the one who other than carrying the staff (emblem) of the *devta* can also pinpoint to the designated point, in a situation when the *devta's mohra* or the site is lost. Because of his occult knowledge, he identifies the location for reinstalling the *mohra* or building the shrine by the devotees. Generally such initiatives are taken by individuals or communities after they experience some mishaps, or series of misfortunes etc. Then they consult the *doala*, who instructs them to locate the *devta's mohra* or shrine in order to ensure the *devta's* continuing protection.

Apart from the above *karkuns*, there are others workers of *devtas* such as *nagara* players, *masaalachi*, who carry torches, flag lifters, *katwals*, the assistants of *bhandari*, *kardars*—workers who render service at the *devasthan* and *kahars* who carry *devta's* palanquin. Nowadays, to run the affairs of a popular shrine in a proper manner, management committees are being instituted with members nominated by the devotees.

## 18. Nadiyala

As in the plain areas of Jammu region, the job of playing the drum is done by *gardis*, the same is done by *nadiyalas* in the hilly belt of Udhampur. They play the drum at the *devta's* shrine on occasions of *jaatar* and create various kinds of sounds from their mouth, which may be a reminiscence of forgotten practice of chanting of mantras

**18. A. Bhandari:** He is the storekeeper who is in charge of *devta's* store. It is the duty of a *bhandari* to take care of items in *devta's* store like the musical instruments, ornaments, items of decoration etc. He not only controls the *bhandar*



(store) but also keeps an account of income and expenditure. Nowadays this position mostly remains vacant and the job of the *bhandari* is done by the *pujari* himself.

**18. B. Bhojaki:** The term *bhojaki* has its origin in ancient practice related to a class of Brahmins whose sole job is to supervise the preparation of food items (*bhog*) and then presenting the same to the deities in temple. But in the context of folk religion, the *sevadar* at a *Sati* temple or *dehri* is called as *bhojaki*. A *Sati* before entering into the pyre, sometimes announces as to who is going to be her *bhojaki*. The one who during the ritual of *hatya manaana*, is held responsible for the death of *sati*, or the one who has helped her or the one who enjoys the grace and confidence of the *sati*—all act as *bhojakis*. There is no barrier of caste: a *bhojaki* can belong to any cast. For instance *Mandali Rajputs* are the *bhojakis* at the *dehri* of Baba Brahmdev's mother. The *dati* is worshiped by five sub-castes of Dogra *mahajans*. In case there is no *bhojaki* in a *sati* temple/*dehri*, then a *purohit* does the role of *bhojaki*.

**18. C. Dakount /Pahatre:** There is a custom of doing *tulaa-daan* of *Shani graha* in order to mitigate the ill effect of planet Saturn. A *tulaa-daan* is an act of weighing the affected person with equal measure of items like grass, milk or *sat-naaza* (seven cereals and fruits). Those Brahmins who accept this *daan* are called as *dakount* and also sometimes *dubduba*. They also had a practice of going to villages and singing lyrics of *Bhatt-Bhattni* genre which were much liked by farming communities as the lyrics contained nuggets of native wisdom with regards to elements of nature like water, clouds, rain etc.



## 19. Jaatar of Lok Devtas

*Jaatar* is the colloquial form of Hindi word *Yatra* which means 'journey' or a 'procession'. It generally means pilgrimage to holy places such as confluences of sacred rivers, places associated with Hindu epics such as the Mahabharata and Ramayana and other sacred pilgrimage sites.

In folk religious practices of Jammu region, the *Jaatar* is one such occasion which is held in honour of *lok devta*. Called as taking the *devtas* for a *sair*—pleasure walk, *Jaatar* in Bhadarwah area of Jammu, is known as *Jaatal*. The purpose for collective celebration of *Jaatars* remains the same everywhere and includes prosperity of the village, freedom from natural calamities, increase of cattle wealth, enhancement of crop production, safeguard against diseases and outside malefic influences.

The *Jaatar* related folk celebrations are mostly held from the month of *Jyaistha* till *Kartika* month (from April to October-November). In Duggar the *Jaatar* is of two types. One is the *day-Jaatar* and the other *night-Jaatar*. The *day-Jaatar* is organized after sun rise. On the chosen day led by family *doala*, devotees carrying flags of the *devta*, start the journey towards *devta's* main shrine. Upon reaching there they herald the *devta* by calling out *jaikaras* like *Jai devta*, *Jai Bava* and place *jhandas* (flags) in the shrine. The *pujari* does *puja* of the *devta* as per folk practice including giving a ritual bath and burning incense, *guggal dhoop* or a wild shrub. Immediately after the *puja*, the *devta's* *gardi* or *naath* sings songs with beats of the *dhol* and invites the *devta* to enter to take possession of his devotee. The loud and fast beats of the drum lead to a kind of shivering in the bodies of some devotees. When a devotee stands up and starts rotating



his head, it is believed that the *devta* has entered his body. While in a trance such devotees also carry flags of the *devta* on their shoulders and dance. Sometimes they also beat themselves with *jhunde*. During this trance the *gardi* changes the beats of the drum which results in faster whirls of the devotees. After sometime when a *doala* gets tired, he calms down and addresses in a composed voice to *gardi*: *Bolo Nath ji Sri Ram Sri Ram*. *Gardi* repeats *Sri Ram, Sri Ram*. The *doala* also utters names of gods and goddesses and other chants. Then he suddenly goes into the divination mode and starts speaking about the problems of the seekers sitting in the congregation. Consequently, the seekers introduce themselves and narrate their problems one by one. The *doala*, in his altered state of consciousness tells them the cures and other measures and also whether the *devta* is happy or unhappy with them and for what reasons and failings on the part of seekers, who then ask for *devta*'s forgiveness and promise not to repeat such mistakes in the future.

In the higher reaches of Udhampur where the *night-jaatars* are organized, the main role is played by *pran*-the *pujari* and *nadiyalas*. No *kaarak* of the *devta* are sung, but *nadiyalas* produce different kinds of sounds. The noticeable feature here is that after dinner the devotees, dressed up in ceremonial dresses, perform folk dance Kud, which goes on till the early hours of the next morning.



# Folk Rituals

## 1. Introduction

Folk rituals are an inseparable part of folk religion. Performed at specific occasions, these may be undertaken by individuals, families, by a group or a community for varied purposes such as part of their religious obligation, satisfaction of spiritual or emotional needs. Rituals are also performed for practical purposes and specific ends like fertility, good harvest, good weather and cure of diseases. Full of symbolic actions, folk rituals typically involve special gestures and words, recitation of fixed oral texts, performance of special music, songs, processions, manipulation of certain objects, use of special dresses, consumption of special food, animal sacrifice and much more.

Folk rituals aid in creating a firm sense of group identity, social binding and even nourishing interpersonal relationships. They also express and reinforce shared values and beliefs in folk societies. A few folk rituals practiced in rural and hilly areas of Jammu region are as under:

## 2. Gusaintan

This ritual is held for the health of livestock, welfare of the family and good crop. On the fifth day after *amavasya* (the new moon day), wheat, maize and *kodra* (Millet) is washed and mixed in a pot. On the fifth day when it sprouts, the grains are taken out of the pot and left to dry. Afterwards the dried grains are grounded to make flour. If the weight of flour is one kilo then 20 kilos of *kodra* is mixed and cooked in a vessel. When the mixture emits an aroma then



it is mixed in cold water. It is again diluted and hid behind a curtain. In the evening devotees call a *prouhit* who sits along with family members and other villagers and sings songs in praise of a *devi* and *devta* for the entire night. The songs sung on the occasion are called as *Gusaintan*. In the morning after offering prayers to the *kul devtas*, the *prasad* is then distributed amongst the invited gathering.

### 3. Kharka

This folk ritual is related to agriculture and is observed by farmers after the arrival of new crop in the home. In this ritual there is no practice of calling a *prouhit*. The ladies of the house, according to their family customs, take a bath, dress up in fine clothes, don red *dupatta* and ornaments like *natth* (nose ring), sit on the right side of the doorjamb, facing towards the east. Then on a leavened portion of cow dung is placed five to seven pebbles as *devtas* and given a ritual bath. After doing *puja* of *devtas* with flowers, rice, *sindhoor*, *dhruba* grass, the kernels of a new wheat crop are put on them as offering. The *Banaa* branches with leaves are used as a fly whisk and waved over the *devtas* to keep them cool. The ritual proceeds with ladies offering salt, jaggery, turmeric, cotton, *dhoop*. A lamp is also shown to *devtas* with ladies chanting following: /“*Jai Bechariye Datiaye/ Dataya, Luna Neyiae Pyariye, Gurhe Neyiae Mitthiyae, Kapah Jenayiae Chittiyae, Tere Hunda Kharka Ditta Ai/ Baal-Bachcha Raji Rakkheyaan, Maal-Baccha Sukkhi Rakkheyaan, Bhandaar Pahriye Rakkheyaan, Proahane Gi Aunde Jandde Rakkheyaan, Puhll Kutth Maaf Kareyaan/ Hail o innocent Dati/Data, who is dear as salt, sweet as jaggery, white as cotton, Kharka is offered on your name.*



Pray, keep our children healthy, our cattle safe, our stores full, let guests come and go from our home; do forgive our mistakes and failings/.

The family elder goes to the shrine of the family deity along with the dish prepared out of the grains of the new crop along with *dhoop*, earthen lamp and *navaid* ( the food offered to a deity as part of a worship ritual and it is forbidden to taste such food during its preparation or before it is offered to the family deity). After reaching the shrine, the family elder offers the dish (*navaid*) to the *mohra* (idol) of *kul devta* and thanks him for the ample crop. On this day a few near and dear ones are also invited and served with food.

#### 4. Gudda-Guddi Ritual

There are rituals for all kinds of problems and issues faced by rural folks in day to day life. In Jammu's stony and dry Kandi belt, where till a few decades back, cultivation was totally dependent on seasonal rains, the timely downpour was very important for farmers. So when rains were inordinately delayed or quite deficient, then rain related ritual were held by the people.

One such ritual was the marriage of *Gudda-Guddi*, (male and female dolls). The dolls are made out of rags and their marriage ceremony is held by children who also organize a *dhaam* (community feast) on the occasion. But if still does not rain, then a *swaang* (farce) is performed in which the extended family of dolls like sons, daughters and grand children are also included. It is followed by enactment of the deaths of the dolls. The *Gudda* is then cremated along with *Guddi* who sits in her husband's pyre as *Sati*. As both the dolls are burning in the fire, the children shout following



verses: \Guddi-Guddae (or *Buddhi-Buddhae*) *Da Choonda Jaleya, Bar, Bar Badalla Kaleyaa*/ Guddi-Gudda are on fire/ shower rain, oh black cloud/.

After the rain, when the rainbow appears, (called as *Guddi-Guddae Di Peeng*—swing of Dolls), the children say that *Guddi-Gudda* are enjoying the swing ride in heavens<sup>99</sup>.

## 5. Rath Partaana—Ritual to Ward off Menacing Clouds

Not only the lack of rain but the untimely appearance of hail bearing dark clouds cumulonimbus clouds), especially when crops are ripe, also necessitates rituals by natives to protect their village against destructive weather conditions, such as storms, hail, or torrential rains. Locally called as *Rath Partana*, this ritual is done by *Jogis*. It gets its name from the Dogra belief wherein appearance of cumulonimbus clouds is ascribed to God Indra, and called as *Indra da Rath Chaddi Aanaa*. In such a case of bad weather threatening the ripe crops, the *Jogi* of a village comes to the rescue of people by turning away the Indra's chariot from the area of his *jajmans*<sup>100</sup> through his *Yoga Vidya*<sup>101</sup>.

Since olden times, in a symbiotic relationship, the economic needs of the *Jogi* and his family were taken care of by the respective village societies, which in turn ensured protection to the crop in case of unnatural weather conditions. It was also the duty of a *Jogi* to protect the crops of his *jajmans*. The appearance of dark clouds at the time when crops were ripe, not only posed a challenge to a *Jogi* but also as an opportunity to prove his spiritual prowess to people.

At such occasions, the *Jogi*, after mixing the *Shiv Naadi* from his *jholi* (bag) with ashes from the *dhoohna*



(continuously smouldering fire at *Naath Panthi* Shrines) would sit in *padamasana* (cross-legged yoga posture) and tries to connect the earth and the sky (*dhahrt-Gaas Ik karna*). This awakening of his *kundlalani shakti* is termed as *Dhahrt-Gaas Ralana*. He then takes the ash mixture in his right hand and while sprinkling some of it on his *ishta devta*, chants *ahwaan* (invocation) *mantras*. After recitation of *mantras*, he transfers the ash to his left hand and blows it in the direction in which he intends to send away the clouds.

At the time when two *Jogis* are trying to do the same, then whosoever loses the competition, is understood to leave his hereditary area of *jajmani* or accepts the subservience of the winner *Jogi* by handing him over his *dhol* and *jholi*. Tales eulogizing the tall character of such *Jogis* are part of Dogra folklore<sup>102</sup>.

## 6. Jagra

In the villages around Gandh Top area of Ramnagar, in case of an extreme dry weather conditions, there is tradition to pray to *Basak Nag*, the presiding deity of the area, by holding the ritual of *Jagra*. The *Jagra* starts after mid-night, from the village of Rasli and Kalya with *chelas\pujaris* of the *tharas*, who carrying big *gaja*-flag lead the procession and followed by *Jagrus*—devotees carrying *masahras* (burning torches) and shouting *jaikaras*: */Bolo Baba Basak di Jai, Dal Chhatr di jai, Baskunde di jai\*. Some devotees carry a big *rote* and *nayoj* for the accompanying *baajdars*—musicians and playing drum and flute.

Different groups from other *sendhein--sthans* also join at the Gandh Top temple of *Bava Basak*. Upon their arrival at the temple, the *chela* is the first one to take the *pradakhshina*



of the temple and then others follow, shouting *jaikaras*. The *rote* is placed in front of the temple door and all the *masahras* are placed upon it. When a big *gyana* (bonfire) starts burning, the *chela* directs the designated person to start the process of animal sacrifice, who takes the sacrificial animal such as lamb to the top of the temple *kalasha*, and cuts it from the head. The *chela* immerses his hands in the animals' blood and makes a hand print on the idol of *Basak Nag*. After this the *chela* goes into trance and when he shouts *jaikara* of the *devta*, all music stops. Then he starts making predictions as per the directions of the *devta*: whether it is going to rain or not, about the robustness of crops etc. The devotees also pray to *devta* for his continuing benevolence. This is followed by sacrificing of animals by *Jagrus*. The liver and lungs of the animals are roasted in the fire, which as *batal* along with *nayoj* is distributed among the musicians. It is followed by performance of the *Kud* dance in the courtyard of *Bava Basak temple*. Later, dancers also dance at adjoining temple courtyard of *Naga Devta Bava Sachaayi*. The *jagrus* return home before sun sets<sup>103</sup>.

## 7. Magokara Ritual

In case of extraordinary delay in rain when the fear of drought looms large, this ritual is observed at village Bandh Ghat, Billawar, where the presiding deity is *Tagat Nag*. As per directions of the *chela*, the ritual starts with devotees eating one time in a day and sitting in front of the *devta's* temple at the place designated by the *chela*.

In the night a *gyana* is lit. This is repeated every night with the location of the *gyana* moving closer to the temple. This is done for two purposes. One is to make the *devta* realize the



danger that he may get suingled out by the approaching fire and the other is to impress upon the devotion of people and their entreaties to him for sending the much needed rain. It is said that till the days of Partition, those who participated in *Magokara* ritual were duty bound to sleep on beds of thorns.



## Marriage Customs

### 1. Types of Marriages among Dogras

The marriage system among Dogras, who as a rule maintain *Gotra* and *Kula* exogamy, has been of three types: (A) *Dharam or Punn*—in which nothing was accepted from the bridegroom's side. (B) *Dohry*—generally a ceased practice, *Dohry* was an exchange involving two or three families. In this daughters from two families were exchanged. It was a social arrangement in which daughter was given away to bring home the daughter-in-law. Some Dogra communities in very remote areas still follow such a type of marriage. The custom seems to have developed at some point of time in history because of the social and demographic reasons such as declining sex ratio and non-availability of brides. Encountering difficulties in finding matches for their sons, the families resorted to an exchange of daughters. This custom led to many mismatches such as very young girls were made to wed to middle aged widowers or old men. (C) *Chadar Paana*—Marrying brother's widow was a common practice in Jammu region. The influence of Arya Samaj in early 19th century in urban centers of Duggar, which encouraged the remarriage of widows, also played a role in renewed social recognition of such alliances. Furthermore such marriages also ensured a secured future for the children of the deceased brother. (D) *Duaahl*—In some hilly areas of Udhampur, Kathua and Doda, there used to be a practice of keeping 'the other woman', who was called as *Duaahl*. (E) *Surrogate marriage*—The type of marriage in which a husband engages in marriage or sexual



relations with the sister of his wife, usually after the death of his wife or if his wife has proven infertile, was also common. (F) *Sale-Purchase marriage*—This type of marriage, where payment was made for the bride, was once prevalent among remote hill communities of Jammu. Now inter-caste and widow remarriages are becoming common among Dogras and other communities.

## 2. Polygamy

Polygamy in Dogras Hindus is taboo. Dogras opted for second marriage only after the death of the previous wife. No doubt the practice was in vogue in the upper strata of the Dogra society, but its presence among the commoners is only found in case the first wife is unable to sire children and she acquiesces to the second marriage of her husband for the sake of carrying on the family name and for performing the last rites of parents.

**2.1. Early/Child Marriage:** The practice of marrying children was also prevalent in Duggar since ancient times. Like other parts of India, the young girls after their formal betrothal stayed back at their parents' home till they attained the age of puberty after which they were sent to their in-laws place. But this practice came to end especially after Maharaja Hari Singh banned child marriage in 1940s and raised the age of marriage for girls to 16 years and boys to 18 years. The spread of modern education and reform movements also played role in putting a stop to this practice which many times resulted in great misery for the young girls such as mismatch, widowhood at a young age, psychological tensions and family feuds etc.



### 3. Daehj (Dahej-Dowry)

The custom of *Daehj* is prevalent in Dogra and other communities. It is demanded and given. With changing times though, the parents of the bridegroom may not be forthright in their demand of dowry, but do expect dowry, which is given both in cash and kind. Only a few decades back dowry items used to be displayed for the viewing by the *biradari* and *baratis*.

It is customary to give gifts to the groom at every stage of the betrothal process such as *dekha*, *roka*, *thakha*, *sagan*, and also after marriage on the occasion of *daphera*, *raphera*, or *maklava*. The *daphera*, *raphera* or *maklava*, takes place two or three days after the marriage, but when child marriage was prevalent, it took place when the girl was 12 and the boy 15 to 18 years of age. It is a general practice that the bride's parents, even after marriage, send gifts in form of clothes, victuals, etc. to their daughter and her in-laws on all important religious and social occasions, particularly on *Basoaa*, *Karya Chouth*, *Lohri*, *Deyali* and *Skalore* (*Dharma Tihahda*)<sup>104</sup>.

**3.1. Divorce:** Divorce was unknown in Dogras but in present times divorce cases are being reported in urban areas and even rural pockets of Duggar. Divorces are happening for reasons of barrenness of women, impotency of the husband, maladjustment, insanity as well as cruelty of the husband. With enactment of stringent anti-dowry laws, the harassment caused by demand of dowry is also becoming the ground for asking for divorce.



#### 4. Marriage among Gaddis

Marriage is a must amongst the tribals. It is believed by Gaddis that an unmarried person will die of a dog's death. The Gaddis are monogamous. The boy and the girl are never consulted and the marriage is arranged by parents or guardians.

The Gaddis do not favor polygamy unless the wife is barren or dead. It is not essential that the plural wives should be real sisters, or cousins. Even a wife can bring her old relatives with her. When a man has two wives then both live with the husband in the same house. The position of the first wife is always superior to that of the subsequent one. In such cases the consent of the first wife is taken for the second marriage. Such Polygamy is permitted to the entire community. The children if born as a result of Polygamy, are considered legitimate and treated sympathetically. The five types of marriages prevalent among Gaddis are:

(1) ***Byah-Daan Pun***: The regular betrothal takes place with mutual consent of the parents of the boy and the girl. To mature the betrothal, negotiations take place between the parties and the usual rituals like *kanyadan* are observed at the time of marriage.

(2) ***Batta Satta (Marriage by Exchange)***: The groom gets his bride in exchange for his real sister or a cousin sister, who is then married to the wife's brother. This type of marriage is considered inferior to *Daan Pun* marriage. The number of such marriages is very low in the Gaddi community.



(3) **Jhanjrara:** This marriage is by elopement, consent agreement and mutual understanding among the relatives. When a woman elopes with someone, the new husband fixes date and time for *Jhanjrara*. Neighbors and relatives are invited for the occasion. The bride is dressed in new clothes, ladies comb her hair, the *doris* of *suhag* tied to the *chak* are arranged on the head of the bride. Vermillion is put on the *maang* of the bride. If the new husband is financially well off, he offers *balloo* and ear rings on this occasion. *Jhanjrara* takes place during the night and feast is also given. Sometimes *Jhanjrara* is arranged on peaceful and mutual understandings. In this case simple ceremony of *Dora Langna* in the name of new husband is performed. This is a common practice, no feast is given.

(4) **Jhind Phuk/ Brar Phuk (Elopement Marriage):** This marriage is by elopement. If a girl elopes with her lover without the consent of her parents, then the couple solemnizes the marriage by burning a bush wood and going round the fire eight times hand in hand or with bride's sheet tied to the boy's girdle. No rituals are performed. The *Prouhit* does not attend this marriage. Though it is a recognized marriage among Gaddis, yet 'marriage by elopement' is not considered a healthy practice.

(5) **Ghhar Javantri:** Prevalent in olden times, this type of marriage is now non-existent in Gaddis. The boy had to work as a domestic servant in the house of his would be father-in-law. The duration of service depended on the prevailing circumstances. In some cases part-time service was rendered, in other cases the boy had to work seasonally. The duration of work could be within the range of 2 to 8 years, which was compulsory. Marriage took place only after the boy had retired from the service of the girls' parents, After marriage



the couple stayed at the boy's house. It was in exceptional and compelling circumstances that this type of service for marriage was accepted and practised.

## 5. Divorce System

The word divorce as such does not exist in Gaddis. They use the following terms in this respect: (a) *Dooaa Ghar Kari Leva Ha*—It means that a Gaddi woman has settled down with a second husband, (b) *Chhaddi Ditti*—Where a husband leaves his wife and also permits her to settle down with someone else, (c) *Jargati Dei Dethi Ha*—Where a husband allows his wife according to some agreement to remarry. Such a marriage occurs under the following circumstances as when the husband is suffering from some incurable disease like leprosy or found to be impotent, or has been guilty of bestiality or when there is doubt about the faithfulness of husband or wife or when the wife elopes with someone<sup>105</sup>.

## 6. Marriage among Gujjars

In Jammu and Kashmir all Gujjars are Sunni Muslims. The marriage is generally a low budget affair amongst nomad Gujjars and Bakarwals. Within a budget of 50 thousands rupees, Gujjars organize all social rituals related to marriage including hosting of dinners or lunch for relatives and friends on occasion of *Tael*, *Nehari* and *Meil*—three main rites of tribal marriage. In case of *Bado Biya*- the grand marriage, the nomads spend up to one lakh on a wedding<sup>106</sup>. *Banhara Gujjars* cook rice and serve with *ghee* and *shakkar*. Among Nomad and Pahari Gujjars a light non-vegetarian meal is served.

There is a custom to give dowry. It includes a metal trunk, light bedding, a few kitchen utensils and other essential items for seasonal migrations. *Mehar*, the religious binding, is fixed between rupees 5000 to 10,000. The other gifts to a



bride on her entry to a groom's house include buffalos, cows, sheep or goat.

There is increasing opposition to old *Kharchi* system popular among some nomads wherein the groom's family pays the full expenditure of the wedding to the bride's family. Marriages among nomad Gujjars are arranged in a hurry by *Kadho* or *Adhaloo*—abducting a girl of choice (unmarried) or woman (married) with her consent. Only few nomads favor *kadho*—the abduction which is considered an act of heroism and valour to marry a chosen woman. But the majority says that it is anti-social<sup>107</sup>.

**6. A. Polygamy:** Polygamy has been popular among Gujjars and especially Bakarwals. Many nomads favor marrying two women—to generate human resources to run daily affairs of tribal life, while a few even go for marrying three to six wives. But this tradition is declining fast. Most of nomad Gujjars, arrange the marriage of their children at the age of 14 to 18. Girls generally get married to relatives.

In a Gujjar marriage 200 to 300 guests are invited. Along with declining interference of *Muqaddam*—the tribal headman—in Gujjar marriages, the crimes committed on marriages related issues are also low. Normally no one among nomad Gujjars is allowed to remain unmarried<sup>108</sup>.



## Bhaakh: An emblematic musical form of Jammu

*Bhaakh*, an emblematic music form of Jammu region enjoys a unique position amongst the folk musical traditions of India as well as the world. It is a chorus narrative song with minimum lyrics and sung by a group of four to ten singers without the accompaniment of any musical instruments. This musical art form that lends a distinct identity to the folk music of Jammu region has a quality of stirring emotions like love, union remembrance, aloofness and separation. The uniqueness of *Bhaakh* lies in its rare musical structure in which a chord is created by singing notes of *sa* and *ma* in consonance by two singers. The meter is irregular and determined by undulations in tone. The form, for its musical texture marked with polyphony, has extraordinary resemblance with the Western harmony of sounds particularly with French Culture i.e. without losing its individual note and rhythm.

It is sung by minimum four singers—who keep one hand on the ear and other hand makes patterns in the air with flow of notes<sup>109</sup>. Starting from one basic note, they pick up different notes such as low, medium and high—all three scales of *saptak*—and then come back to the original note. One lead singer sings the opening lines, while other is the *Bhaakhu*, whose job is to *suwaai lena* that is taking up the high note and which is stretched out. The rest of two singers provide the base note, much like the *tanpura* in Indian classical music.

*Bhaakh* singing is not based on subject matter but on music and musical notes. The notes of *Bhaakh* do not stop,



they go on flowing and during melas and festivals, the group of singers continues singing the whole night<sup>110</sup>. A shared regional cultural heritage, *Bhaakhs* are mainly sung in the hilly terrain of Duggar while in the higher and snowy areas they give way to musical traditions of Bhadarwahis and Gaddis with whom music and dances are inextricably intertwined.

*Bhaakhs* are of two types: the *lammi Bhaakh* (long) and *nikki Bhaakh* (short). There are many sub-regional varieties such as *Pangasti Bhaakh*—from Ramkot to Manwal, *Sumarti Bhaakh*—from Ramkot to Ujjh areas, *Blahlalti Bhaakh*, *Chapaali Bhaakh*, *Drordi or Ghrordi Bhaakh*, *Mallar Bhaakh*, *Jandrahi Bhaakh*, *Maerehlu Bhaakh*<sup>111</sup>. Traditionally *Bhaakh* has always been sung without the accompaniment of any instrument whatsoever, but nowadays singers have started using instruments and rhythm.

Since last half century, the duo of singers Krishna Kumari and Praduman Singh has emerged as ambassadors of *Bhaakh* who through their concerts, managed to spread the magic of *Bhaakh* in different parts of the country as well as abroad. The well known *Bhaakh* sung by the duo goes as — *Makhmal bi dinna goriye, malmal bi dinna, mere kanne chitt laayaan, paharein diye Gaddanein/Malmal naiein laindi, o, pattuey da cholu migi changga jee, Chambey deya rajeyaa* (The king of Chamba tries to seduce a young and comely Gaddan (shepherd women) with precious robes of velvet and fine muslin. But she refuses Saying that her robe of *pattu* (homespun woolen fabric made of goat hair) is dear to her and she does not want his precious gifts<sup>112</sup>).

Some of the most prominent *Bhaakh* singers of Jammu region were Mastram & party, Chaturmath Jogi, Shenkari



Devi & party, Lajja Laxmi, Bhaan Devi & party, Kouri Devi & party. During Maharaja Pratap Singh's reign (1885-1925) two sisters, Sunkhu and Bhaggan were very famous and gifted *Bhaakhsish*.



# Musical Instruments of Jammu

## 1. Introduction

Like all traditional societies, music instruments are intrinsic part of the unique cultural heritage of the various ethnic groups across the different regions of Jammu and Kashmir. Skilled craftsmen making instruments use mostly indigenous materials and pass on the expertise from generation to generation. But sadly because of lack of patronage, scarcity of material and simply loss of interest, many such workshops have closed down and those who were dependent upon it have to seek their livelihood elsewhere. The craft of making musical instruments is on the verge of vanishing into oblivion.

Across the entire Jammu belt, different customs are associated with the musical instruments played on festive occasions, religious ceremonies, folk dramas and celebrations like wedding or child birth. All categories of musical instruments are in vogue for the accompaniment of songs, dances and other special occasions like *Jaatr*, witchcraft etc. The categories of instruments are wind, percussion, and stringed varieties. Different Musical Instruments are used in different purposes: *Damru* is mostly used for a spiritual ceremony, *Shaina*, *Dholak*, *Dhol*, Trumpets in marriages and other social festivities, *Sarangi* is used to narrate ballads, *bheints*. *Gungrooes* (Ankle Bells), *Tabla*, *Sitar*, etc. are mostly used for entertaining purposes. Most musical instruments are made locally, utilizing the local materials and the traditional knowledge passed down from generations.



## 2. Wind (Blowing) Instruments

These are made out of a wide range of materials and for a wide-ranging purposes. Various kinds of wind (blowing) instruments are used by ethnic groups across the Jammu region. These instruments have an air column made of bamboo, wood or metal, in which there are holes for producing notes. The blown instruments are further divided into two categories: simple blown instruments such as flute, *Shankh*, *Narsingha*, *Kail* and blown instruments with reeds such as *Shehnai*, *Tuti* etc.

**2.1. *Narsingha*** : The wind instrument, *Narsingha*, is used in one form or the other throughout the country and is called by various names in different states. It is known as *Turi* in Uttar Pradesh, *Bugdu* in Rajasthan, *Ransingha* in Madhya Pradesh and in Chamba district Himachal Pradesh. The instrument is divided into two parts –the larger part and the smaller part. Both parts are of the shape of English Alphabet C. One part is thicker and broader than the other part. While joining the parts, each part is joined at the back, thus its shape comes out to be like the letter S. *Narsingha* is blown at the lower end by holding it in the air. Only one or two notes can be obtained through this instrument. It is also played during religious ceremonies. The curves of its body are bound by rings of brass at three or four places for strength. Besides strengthening, these rings serve the purpose of ornamentation. Today, if someone wants to buy a *Narsingha*, he/she has to go to Chamba in Himachal Pradesh where *Narsingha* is still being made by a few families of traditional craftsmen.



**2.2. *Kail*:** It is a wind instrument where wind is blown through a long hollow pipe. More than one meter long, *Kail's* one end is broad while the other end is quite narrow. Only two notes can be got through this instrument which is made of metal, usually brass. This instrument is used during marriages, fairs, festivals and the religious processions.

### **3. Bansari or Banjali (Flute)**

*Banjali* is widely popular across Jammu and predominately perceived as an instrument of the shepherds and nomads such as Gujjars, Bakerwals and Gaddis. It has seven to eight holes and the idea is to help the player produce different kinds of notes as per his/her choice. The flute is made of varied objects like wood, steel, brass and copper. Sometimes one even comes across *bansaris* made of silver. Gujjars and Bakerwals use many kinds of flutes. Most popular is the *Alghoja/Alghojo*, which is a type of flute made from a single hollow shaft of mainly wild-bamboo called *Nagal* in Gojri with six or seven finger holes and normally 7 to 11 inches long. The other type is *Jodi/Do naal*, which are two flutes which when played jointly are called *Jodi* (pair). The instrument is played with three fingers on each side. The signature tunes of Gojri programmes broadcast from All India Radio Jammu /Srinagar/Poonch are based on *Jodi* tunes. Other variety is known as *Banjli*; it varies in size from less than 25 to 45 centimeters. Every nomad is fond of *Banjli* which is normally carried in side-pockets of their upper wear and used to play folk songs like *maahiya* and *jangbaz*, besides the traditional tribal tunes.



## 4. Percussion Instruments

Percussion instruments produce sound when hit with an implement or when it is shaken, rubbed, scraped or acted upon in any other manner. According to its making and playing technique the percussion instruments are divided as: played with strokes of fingers—*duff*, *khanjira*, played with stroke of the stick such as *Dhol*, *Nagaaara*, played with a thread attached at the middle portion with holding at centre—*Damru*, played with palms as well as fingers—*Dholaki* and *Tabla*. Their usage is common in traditional music and dances and religious ceremonies of the hill communities of Jammu.

**4.1. Drums:** Drums play a major role in folk music. Most conspicuously associated with *Bhangra*, the *Dhol* is a major musical accompaniment during any recital of *Karak* and *Baar*, in Jammu region. It is also widely used on diverse occasions, ranging from *Chhinj* to folk dances and festive occasions.

**4.2. Damru:** *Damru* is probably the oldest and traditional form of percussion instrument in India. It is the only remaining form of hour-glass drums which are seen in ancient Indian sculptures. Mostly used in religious ceremonies, *Damru* is a small two-headed drum made of wood with leather drum heads on both ends. The resonator is made of brass. Its height ranges from a few inches to a little over one foot. It is played single handedly. The strikers are beads fastened to the ends of leather cords around the waist of the *Damru*. Knots in the leather can also be used as strikers. As the player waves the drum using a twisting wrist motion, the strikers beat on the drumhead and produce musical notes.



## 5. Nagaara

The *Nagaara* was originally intended for use in wars, for its booming quality. Called as the loudest drum, the *Nagaara* provided a kind of rhythm to the business in royal courts. When used in war, it was a signifier of assault. It was beaten when an army was approaching or when being attacked by the enemy. Its loud resonance gave the battling armies a sense of urgency and fueled the fire to fight.

In peaceful contexts, *Nagaaras* were often stationed above gateways to palaces and forts and played as a welcome gesture. The *Nagaara* was made of a large ensemble called *Noubat* or *Naqaar Kahna* (nine instruments) and played according to a specific timetable.

The *Nagaara* comprises two bowl drums of unequal sizes made of iron, brass and copper. In the pair, one drum is called *dagga* (male) and the other a *madin* (female). The diameter of *Nagaara* varies. Out of two kettle drums, the larger drum is made of copper and is covered with buffalo skin that stretches across the round-bow shaped body and is kept in place with help of interlocking ropes. This drum facilitates a deep sound. The smaller one which is covered with goat skin produces a lighter sound effect. *Nagaara* are traditionally beaten with wooden sticks.

With changing times, the *Nagaaras* have lost their social and religious importance. In remote areas, the instrument is still played during marriage ceremonies, processions or other community dances. It is also used as a temple percussion instrument. In some temples of the region, with the fashion of playing of *Nagaaras* coming to end, the instruments now stand consigned to stores. Moreover not many players are available with knowledge of traditional rhythms played on the instrument.



## 6. Dhol

Played mostly as an accompanying instrument, *Dhol*, is a double sided barrel drum with animal hide stretched over its open ends, covering them completely. These skins can be stretched or loosened with a tightening mechanism made up of either interwoven ropes. The stretched skin on the right side of the barrel is the treble while the left side is the bass. Historically, the *Dhol* has been made from shell of hollowed-out mango or *sheesham* trunk wood but in present times new materials like plastic, steel and fiberglass are also being used. Likewise, the sides of the drum which were earlier prepared from goatskin, are now being crafted out of thin synthetic materials.

A *dhol* is played using two drum sticks: *Tili* and *Dagga*. The *tili* is a thin cane-stick; the *dagga* is a crooked wooden stick: their contrasting shapes and sizes suit the different properties of each side of the drum. The thin sticks often fashioned out of bamboo are called as *chhirak* while the flat ones are called as *lafadaar*, and used to strike *dhol*'s both ends - the female and male sides. The drum is slung over the neck of the player with a strap usually made up of ropes or woven cotton.

Many rhythms are played on *dhol* which correspond to specific functions. Most common rhythm nowadays is *chaal* that consists of 8 beats per measure. The bols of the drum played at the time of *Chhinj* are: *Aao Paincho, bavo paincho, sade pind chhinj ai/ Latt pahjjae, bahn pahjjae, sade jimmei nahin ai* Oh Panchs, you are invited for chhinj at our village/ be ready for a broken leg or arm, come at your own risk/. The *bols* of the drum at the time of marriages etc are happy notes, but on the occasion of death sad notes are



sounded: *doonga pattan, doonga pattan/*. The playing of *dhol* during the *jaatr* is accompanied by a *thali*.

## 7. Dholaki

Similar in design, it is most common instrument used to keep rhythm and time. It is smaller version of *Dhol* and its body is made of wooden hollow. Both the sides are covered with animal hide and like the *Dhol*, to stretch the hide there are strings in which rings are threaded. By pulling the rings, the hide is stretched and it produces the sound of high pitch. Often played during marriage ceremony by ladies, it is placed under knees and struck by hand palms and for additional rhythm the finger ring and *roda* is also struck on its outer casing. Playing of *Dholaki* is considered auspicious and the instrument accompanies *mangal geet*.

**7.1. Dhaunsa or Dhouns:** It is the largest and heaviest of the various forms of drums played in Jammu region. It is played by men using both hands and when played, it adds thrill and life to the festivals, fairs, carnivals and ceremonies. The *dhaunsa* is more often used by the people of Bhadarwah during the *Kud* folk dance of the region.

**7.2. Dafale:** The Gaddis of Jammu and Himachal use the *dafale*, a small round-shaped drum mostly played during wedding ceremonies. Good attention is paid to the visual appeal of the instrument, through flower decoration and application of turmeric paste. Many times, before playing an instrument a religious ceremony is held that proceeds with the chanting of prayers.



## 8. Chimta

Played during the sessions of *bhajan* and *kirtan* at religious places and during folk performances such as *jagraata*, *chimta* (tongs) is a percussion instrument made of two long, flat pieces of metal (usually iron) with pointed ends to which several rings are attached. The two flat blades of iron are about 60 centimeters long or a little short with pointed or round edges. On its arms are fixed small discs (rings) of brass or steel which are plucked in a downward motion to produce tinkling sounds. The instrument held in hands is played by striking the blades against each other. Sometimes it is beaten against the palm to produce the rhythm.

**8.1. Khadtal:** The *khadtal* stands for wooden castanets and is played during the *Ainchali* songs or *jagarata* folk dramas. This instrument has two parts; metallic discs and a wooden frame. Metallic discs numbering two or three and three to five centimeters in diameter are fitted by nail through their centers in a wooden frame which has to be held by hand. The size of the frame may vary between 15-20 centimeters long, five to six centimeters and one centimeter thick into which discs are fitted. This instrument is played by striking it with any firm surface, may be human body, or even the discs may be struck against each other. Two pieces of equal sizes are used in playing by holding one in each hand. The *khadtal* (now also available in metal version), is played during the *ainjali* songs or folk dramas.

## 9. Thali

A struck instrument, *thali*, is a bronze platter, used during



folk song, and religious ceremonies like Jaatr and witchcraft. The sticks that strike the thali are called as *terniyan*. Sometimes a *kara*, the ring of brass or iron is used to strike on the thali. *Thali* is not used to keep time or provide rhythm but it is played in a typical style in *jaatr* or doing witchcraft, such as taking out of snake bite etc. The priest and other people sing songs while the witchcraft is going on. At that occasion the *thali* is struck in a particular style as if the rhythm is provided as accompaniment to the song or dance.

**9.1. *Kensiaan*:** Widely used in religious songs, *kensiaan* is an instrument which consists of two small metal discs made of bronze. The discs are hit with each other to produce sound. In some places of Jammu an earthen pot, *gharha*, (pitcher) is also played as accompaniment. It is struck with fingers either keeping on one's lap or the floor. The other percussion instruments are *chhainne*.

## 10. String Instruments of Jammu

String instruments come in a variety of shapes and sizes and produce sound from vibrating strings when strummed, plucked or slapped. The pitch of string instruments depends not only on the string length but also on its thickness, weight and tension. The vibration of strings against the soundboard produces musical sound.

**10.1. *Chakara*:** Almost extinct, *chakara* comprises only one string fixed within two adjacent bamboo sticks. That single string is to be deftly handled to produce the right tune. It is made of bamboo, and the bow, *gharotu*, is made from hair of a horsetail. It was originally used by bards and minstrels



while travelling through villages and singing their own folksongs on it. It was played with such expertise that the audience was overwhelmed by the rhythm to the extent that they were drawn by the urge to join a war. Today it is played during all special festivals.

**10.2. Murchang:** It is played with a bow with bells on it and is widely used during Jammu folk dramas, such as *Bhagatan*, *Jagrata*.

## 11. Sarangi

A string instrument, which enjoys equal popularity in classical as well as folk music, *Sarangi* is box-like in shape and around two feet long and half a foot wide. Carved from a single block of wood, the instrument has a roughly rectangular but slightly waist like body and broad fretless neck. The lower resonance chamber of *Sarangi* is hollowed out, covered with parchment and a strip of leather at the waist to the elephant-shaped bridge. The bridge of the *Sarangi* supports the pressure of numerous strings.

It has three to four main playing strings and a number of sympathetic strings which may number up to 35. Unlike the *Sitar*, the instrument has no frets or fingerboard; the strings float in the air. Pitch is determined by sliding the fingernail against the string rather than pressing it against a fingerboard (like Violin). The musician, who is seated, normally holds the instrument against his left shoulder in a vertical position and plays with an arched 'bow' held in an underhand grip in his right hand.

Other than folk music, this instrument has traditionally been associated with classical dances like *kathak*, and the



vocal styles of *thumari*, *dadra*, and *khayal*. In Jammu region, *sarangi* has been immortalized by folk singers. Dogri folk singer, late Padmashree Gulam Mohammad, will go down in the history of folk music of Jammu for melodious play of the instrument which used while singing *bheints*—the devotional songs in praise of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi.

At present times, the tradition of playing *sarangi/saaragi* by folk singers is being lost mainly because of the patronage and also the fact that it is a difficult instrument to master.

## 12 Gojri folk instruments<sup>113</sup>

**12.1 Bisili:** *Bisili* is a typical folk instrument used by nomads. It is triangular /trilateral in shape. The instrument has hollow belly with a hole at the centre and two holes on either side, besides a mouth pipe. The player blows his breath through the mouth pipe and plays with fingers on the side holes. It is made of baked clay. Played by the shepherds, this instrument sounds like whistling.

**12.2. Sharnai:** *Sharnai* is derived from Persian word *surr* (feast) *nay* (pipe-reed). A wind instrument, it is usually used as an accompaniment with *Dhol*. The *sharnai* players are also called *Merasi* in Gojri. Usually the senior most person among a drum beating team plays the *Sharnai*. *Dhol* and *sharnai* is an important part of any ceremony and ritual performed by the Gujjars.

**12.3. Chung:** *Chung* is a jaw harp made of iron. The player puts part of the frame in the mouth, with open jaws, so that the chamber of the mouth amplifies the sound. The copper wire in the *Chung* is vibrated with touches of the musician's fingers, with different tempos producing varying rhythms



and tones. Trishul shaped, the tribal Chung is 5 to 7 inch long and is different from the Persian Chung – an Iranian harp. Once a very popular instrument among nomads, presently a few *Chung* players are left among Gujjars of Jammu and Kashmir.

**12.4. *Yaktaro (Eik Taro)*:** A one-string instrument, *Yaktaro* is also a popular instrument among Gujjars of Jammu and adjoining areas of Punjab. Gujjar artistes use this instrument to sing Sufiyana Gojri poetry. *Eik Tara*'s main structure is made of wood and one steel string.

**12.5. *Saargi (Tota)*:** The *Tota* or *Saargi* is popular instrument of Gujjars. Slightly different than *Sarang*i, the *Saargi* is made of wood, animal skin (*madh*) with four up wires and 11 down wires. The helping organ of *saaragi* is called *gaj* in Gojri. *Saargi* is played while singing *baet*, *baramah* and other Gojri folk songs. Some popular Gujjar *saargi* players include Ustad Mohammad Hussain Merasi, Ustad Ghulam Mohammad Danslaya, Ustad Jatoo Merasi, Ustad Noora Merasi and Bashir Mastana<sup>114</sup>.

**12.6. *Dhol*:** *Dhol* is a hollow wooden drum of a large cylindrical shape with its two sides mainly covered with animal skin. It is generally struck on one side with a lose 'L' shaped wooden stick called *damno* and the other with a large thin stick called *chinj*. It is also played with bare hands. It is the principle instrument to accompany the *sharnai* (oboe). *Dhol* players in Gujjars are called *mirasi*. They are invited to play on functions like marriage, *Khatnal*, *Leetari*, *Satranj Chekai*, *Laadi* and on other celebrations. The beats played



during Gujjars dances are called *Dhukro*.

**12.7. *Chimto*:** A kitchen tool (tongs) mainly used to grip and lift objects, it is used as an accompanying instrument with certain modifications by Gujjars. It is used by artistes while singing mystic poetry.

**12.8. *Ghadho/ Ghadholi*:** The *ghara* or earthen pot/ pitcher is played in Gujjar marriages and other ceremonies by womenfolk. In some tribal areas where *dhol* is not allowed owing to religious binding, *ghara* is used in place of *dhol* for singing and dancing. Most of the above musical instruments are also used by Paharis.



# Dances of Jammu

## 1. Introduction

Jammu has a rich treasure of folk dances. Influenced by the topography, climate and socio-cultural and religious ethos of the region, these dance forms are practiced in hilly and rural pockets of Jammu, on different occasions such as arrival of a new season, a particular festival, special celebrations or religious rituals, birth of a child or on a wedding day.

Dances of Jammu can be classified into three main categories: (1) Dances pertaining to religious festivals and places such as *Kud*, *Phummaniyan*, *Chouki dance* and *Chhajja dance* (2) Dances pertaining to harvest season such as *Bhangra*, *Sohadi*, and *Chouki dance* (3) Dances pertaining to all types of social customs, sports like *Bhangra*, *Kikli*, *Jagarna-Dhmachada*, *Gidda*, *Gojra* and *Padari*.

Out of these dances some are popular only in particular areas of Jammu region. The details of different areas and their popular dances are as under: (1) Plain Area- This area situated along the India-Pakistan border is called as Aindhad area<sup>115</sup>. It includes areas like Ranbir Singh Pura, the southern areas running all along the Indo-Pak border in districts of Kathua, Samba, Jammu and Riasi. Here *Bhangra* dance is more popular. (2) The Middle Belt-It includes complete *kandi belt* starting from river Ravi and stretching upto Rajouri town. In this area *Phummaniyan* dance is popular. (3) Hilly Area-

It comprises the upper areas of districts of Riasi, Udhampur, Bhadarwah, Bhalesa, Billawar, Basohli, Bani. Here *Kud* is the predominant form of dance, while *Padari* dance is peculiar to Padar area of Kishtawar<sup>116</sup>.



## 2. Phummani

Mostly performed in *kandi* areas of Duggar, *Phummani* is a ritual dance performed at the shrines of folk deities such as *Gugga Pir*, *Baba Surgal*, *Baba Mandlik*, *Baba Kali Veer*, *Baba Basak* and others. This dance is specially performed on occasions of *Gugyal* or *Gaggail* –the processions which are taken out in villages of Jammu's *kandi belt* on the day of *Gugga Noumi* that is a day after *Krishan Janmashtami* or *Nagapanchami*. The *Gaggail* is led by devotees carrying colorful flags, followed by groups of persons moving with musical instruments (related to worship), and the barefooted *chelas* carrying the *swari* (deity's portable shrines) and in the last are the *Phummani* dancers in rows of two each, dancing and singing *boliyaan*, on beats of *dhols*, *ghariyal* (big bell), *ransinghe* etc. The entire procession which is a colorful spectacle finally arrives at the shrine of *Gugga Pir* or a *Naga deity*.

Other than *Gaggail*, "whenever village folks want to please their deities, they perform *Phummani* dance before them. In some families the *Phummani* dance comes as a tradition. In such families one of the members is also blessed by the deity to be his chela"<sup>117</sup>. In contrast to the exuberance of *Bhangra*, *Phummani* is a dance of measured steps and beats. It is also marked by the dancers' opening and closing of hands in a flower like shape in perfect coordination with beats of drums and movements of their slow steps. Generally, the drum accompanying the dancers plays *kehrva tal*: *Dhage Dhin Na/Dhin Nak Dhage Dhin Nak*<sup>118</sup>.

It is inferred that the *Phummani* dance must have adopted a symbolic name, as the word *Phummani* also means either a bud of flower or an artistically prepared flower-bud like a



bunch of cotton or silky thread<sup>119</sup>. On account of its association with blossoming flower, this dance is also associated with newly born children. Many a time, the *chelas* inspired by their devotion to the folk deity as well as the beats of the drum, enter the house of the parents of the newly born child and take him in their lap and dance along with their fellow dancers. The dancers dancing to beats of drums, tinkling sounds of *ghungroos* tied on their ankles, display variety of movements such as different body positions and directions with raised hands, sometimes going forward and sometimes bending to the right and left respectively.

Dancers also make sounds such as *Ho, Ho*. This phase of the dance is called as *Dhamal*. At the end the dancers keeping their arms close to chest, bend their waists downwards and again dance with great pleasure and produce sounds such as *Si, Si*<sup>120</sup>. Such *Gaggail* processions other than going from village to village to collect money and food items for the *bhandara* (community feast) in the name of a particular deity also visit families where a member has been blessed with recovery from a serious disease, and where dancers perform *Phummani* dance. In return the group gets a good amount of money and food grains for arranging *bhandaras*<sup>121</sup>.

In olden days, in another variation of the dance, it was also performed by a single person or group of two in the wee hours of night around the light of a lamp. Such was the popularity of this dance that dance parties from Jammu were invited by the rich people of Lahore, Layalpur, Multan etc. and those performances were attended by thousands of people. Despite attempts to revive it, *Phummani* dance is almost extinct today. But its memory continues with the word *Phummani* being used as a satirical remark for someone



who exhibits happiness by brisk body movements after some success or a pleasant turn of events.

### 3. Chouki dance

The Chouki is a dance related to harvest and popular in Jammu's *kandi* belt. On the day of *Jeishth Shukla Paksha Ekadashi*, people from all communities come together either on the *sthan* of *Naga Devta* or *dargah of a Pir*. Muslims also participate in it. At the *sthan* of *Naga Devta*, the dancers also keep the mark of *Pir*. Having a purely religious association, the dance is held mostly after the husking operations of the *kharif* crop have come to an end. The grateful farmers and their families assemble at the temple or place of worship on a particular date for a *bhandara* for which everybody contributes some portion of grains from their new crop as a token of thanksgiving to the local deity or a *Pir*. Some time, the *chelas* also perform *jatar* with iron chains (*saunglaan*) in their hands.

Men collectively dance to the tunes of *dhol*, *turahi* and other instruments, while women sing devotional songs during the ceremony such as: */Mere hatth katora eei teil da, mera Pir jangal vitch khedada/ bae tuhn bahodaiyaan Pira sachcheyaa, mera dhayaan tere all laggeyaa/* I have bowl of oil in my hands, my Pir plays in the jungle/ Oh true Pir please bestow your mercy, I feel so drawn to you/<sup>122</sup>. After having enjoyed the ritual dance and music, the assembly of people gathered on the occasion, enjoy the community meal and disperse to their respective places.

### 4. Jagarna

*Jagarna* dance is set to the theme of marriage and marital relationships. It is exclusively performed by women. Children and men are not allowed to witness this dance.



After the bridegroom and *baraat* leave for bride's house for solemnizing the marriage, the ladies get together and start dancing. This dance mostly goes on till the wee hours of night. Since the women remain awake all night, it is called *Jagarna*.

The dance is accompanied by *dholak* and songs (*boliaan*) which are sung by a group of 10- 20 women. This traditional dance form provides one of the rare opportunities for the women to be totally free from the prying eyes of the men and be in a joyful and carefree state of mind.

At the start of the dance, the gathering of women including bridegroom's mother, aunts, grandmother, other relations and neighbors stand in a circle and then one or two ladies come into the centre and while singing folk songs, break into brisk dancing to the rhythm of *dholak* and *gharha* (pitcher). While dancing with the flow of lyrics and movement of frolicking feet, the dancers singing lyrics in a style of gossiping, playfully reveal their marital life and the behavior of their husbands and other intimate feelings and emotions. While repeating the dance steps and songs, the dancing women sing the folk songs such as: *Munde di maa nachaiy, Nachi tamasha dassaiy*.

Because of the free style of the dance and lyrics which leads to a sense of gay abandon among the women folk who uncharacteristically seem to be breaking out of their conventionally controlled social behavior, this dance is also called as *Dhamachada*.

## 5. Chhajja Dance

*Chhajja*, the distinct dance form of Jammu is associated with celebrations of *Lohri* festival which falls on the last



day of month of *Poh*. Having vanished in the city of Jammu since late 1970s, *chhajja* dance is now performed in certain rural pockets only.

A few days before the *Lohri* festival, the young men and boys prepare a colorful *chhajja*, an artistic depiction of fanned out plumage of peacock, mounted on bamboo mannequin. On the day of *Lohri* festival, groups of young boys carrying respective *chhajjas*, accompanied by drummers, go to houses of close friends and relatives who have been blessed with a male child or have solemnize the marriage of a son and dance to the beats of the drum. The young men holding the *chhajja*, the centre of attraction, also start dancing while holding the *chhajja* in the air and making spectacular acrobatic movements. The group stops dancing and leaves only after receiving a gift, mostly in cash, to their satisfaction.

But regrettably, the traditional cultural practices of *Chhajja* dance as an inseparable adjunct to *Lohri* celebration is on the verge of extinction especially young men in rural pockets of Duggar are getting attracted towards modern dance forms and styles.

With the result, on the day of *Lohri*, only a few young kids in groups of two or three are seen carrying commercially made small-sized triangular *chhajjas*. Going to shops and homes to ask for *Lohri* gifts, kids are hardly aware of the cultural significance of the *Lohri* songs they sing on the occasion: *Sundar Mundriye Ho, Tera Kaun Bechara Ho/ Dullah Bhatti walla ho! Dullhe di dheer vyayae ho! Ser shakkar payee ho!*<sup>123</sup>

## 6. Kikli

It is a simple but entertaining dance performed only by



womenfolk, especially by young girls. The dance which is more a game requires no musical instrument. But it assumes the form of a dance when the songs in *tala* (beats) are infused into the game by clapping or beating of the *dhol*. Before starting the dance, the girls divide themselves into several groups. Each girl faces her partner and stands erect with toes meeting, clasp their hands firmly with each other, right to right and left to left making cross at arms. While stretching their arms they throw their bodies backwards and start whirling around the point at the centre of their toes<sup>124</sup>. The dancers while maintaining the balance gradually increase the speed so as to ultimately reach the climax with maximum possible speed and look like rolling wheels. While dancing, the dancers utter the following lines: "*Kikli Kalil Di, Pagg Mere Vir Di, Dupatta Pahrjaie Da, Phitaey Muhn Juaai Da*"<sup>125</sup>. The most characteristic feature of *Kikli* dance is that other than formal occasions, it can be performed at anytime and anywhere by the young girls as an expression of spontaneous joy, happiness and feeling of well being or simply as a robust physical activity and exercise.

## 7. Dandaras

This folk dance is a group dance performed by holding in hands the staves (wooden sticks) and striking them with each other. It is also believed that this dance originated from the *dandaras* of Lord Krishna and is popular with Gurjara tribes of Mahabharata fame<sup>126</sup>.

Practiced in one or the other form throughout the length and breadth of the country, this dance is performed in a circle by men holding sticks in hands and striking them with each other while keeping rhythm with special movement of steps.



The circle expands and contracts as the dance progresses. The accompanying music gradually rises in pitch and the dance reaches its climax. No song is sung during the dance, only musical instruments are played. In Jammu, other than Dogras, this dance is also performed by Gaddis at the time of *jatars*. The dancers accompanying the *chhajja* on the day of *Lohri* festival also play *dandaras*.

## 8. Geetru

*Geetru* is the traditional narrative song-dance form of Jammu which is mostly performed in Udhampur and Kathua districts. The lead singer—dressed up in typical Dogra attire comprising a long *kurta* and *chooridar pyjama*, *waistcoat*, turban on the head, and wearing *ghungroos* (ankle bells)—sings folk lyrics and dance in slow and fast rhythms. Other male members of the group, who play musical instruments, sit in a semi circle.

Once in a while, the main singer while singing breaks into an impromptu dance at the completion of a stanza. The use of mimicry and theatrical movements, along with swirling and fast dance movements are main attractions of *Geetru*. The dance is generally performed by a group of eight to ten artistes who follow the lead singer as chorus with the accompaniment of *dholak* and a *chimta* and powerful group singing. Some members of the group also stand up and dance along with the lead dancer.

Presently Romalo Ram & party are the most famous group of *Geetru* performers from Ramnagar area of Udhampur district. According to Kavi Rattan, eminent theatre personality of J&K, other prominent solo performers in 1980s-1990s were Mohammad Sharief Mallik and Gulabari, a Muslim lady artist from Bani area of Basohli.



## 9. Bhangra

The lively music and dance form of *Bhangra* has its origin in Punjab (both east and west). It seems to have begun as a part of harvest festival celebrations, especially Baisakhi which falls on April 13, every year.

In due course of time, *Bhangra* has moved from its ritualistic associations and has become part of such diverse occasions as weddings, new-year celebrations, or other important social and cultural functions. *Bhangra* is also popular in Jammu's areas bordering Punjab. This is due to the geographical proximity and also the fact that Jammu for some time from late 18<sup>th</sup> till mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, had remained under the political control of Punjab. With the result, in the 150 kilometers belt that runs from Lakhampur to Deva Batala in the Chhamb sector, and which exhibits a visible Punjabi influence in language, cuisine and dress, *Bhangra* is the main dance form of farmers.

Dressed up in the traditional long *kurta*- a long shirt, *tehmad*—the colorful piece of cloth wrapped around the waist, and turbans, the *Bhangra* dancers, dancing to the fast beats of one or combination of percussion instruments like *dhol*, *dhad*, *daffi*, coupled with tunes of other instruments such as *tubmi*, *sarangi*, *chimta* etc—mesmerize the onlookers with a number of energetic movements executed with mastery of symmetry and co-ordination.

Sung in energetic voice, the *Bhangra* lyrics in Punjabi language generally cover social issue such as love, relationships, marriage etc. The dancers while dancing often yell phrases like *Hey, hey, hey, Balle, Balle or Heyaripa*.



For the last fifty years, *Bhangra* has enjoyed a surge in popularity worldwide both in traditional form and in fusion with contemporary dance genre like *hip-hop*, *house* and *reggae*.

Nonetheless, in Jammu region, it is the traditional *Bhangra* style that is performed by farmers during Baisakhi celebrations or on occasions of marriages etc. While the amateur dancers in schools and colleges perform it on annual days and other cultural functions.

## 10. Gidda

In Jammu, the *Gidda* dance form like *Bhangra* has come from neighboring Punjab owing to the centuries-old historical and socio-cultural interactions. Performed in areas of Jammu contiguous to Punjab plains, *Gidda* is an exclusive dance of womenfolk. A song and dance combination, *Gidda* is mostly performed on festive occasions like engagement, marriage, birth of male child and other happy socio-cultural gatherings, functions and festivals. Nowadays, *Gidda* has become a popular item in cultural programs organized on annual days of educational institutes. It also figures as one of the dance forms in performances by state-sponsored cultural troupes.

The dance derived from an ancient ring dance for women, is bright, colourful and energetic and usually performed to rhythmic clapping and *Boliyaan*<sup>127</sup>. It is a very vigorous folk dance and is very much an art of leg movements. Women wear short shirts (*cholis*) with *ghaghra* or *lehenga* or Punjabi *Salwar-Kamiz*, rich in colour, cloth and design. Dancers



with embroidered *dupatta* and heavy jewelry participate in as many numbers as possible since there is no restriction (normally from eight to twenty five).

One of the women participants generally sings the *boli* and when the last but one line is reached by all of them, the tempo of the song rises and all start dancing. In this manner *bolis* are coordinated with the dance sequences which continue for a considerable period of time. Mimicry is also a part of *Gidda* dance. One girl may play the aged bridegroom and another his young bride for fun or one may play a quarrelsome sister in-law and another humble bride. *Gidda* is popular because it is not performed according to any cut-and-dry rule. While the harmony is the essence, in *Gidda* movements that are inclusive of swinging and twisting the body, involve shaking of the shoulders, bending to a double and clapping. The *Gidda* dance also incorporates in it the village life scenes of woman spinning, fetching water from the well and grinding.

Example of a Boli: /*Kithen Di Main Janmi Jai, Te Kithon Gai Biyahi, Koonjaan Vangar Phiran Namani, Jang Vich Gaya Mahi*/ Where was I born and where have I been to. I wander hither and thither like a bird in desperation as my husband has gone to war/.

## 11. Kud

It is the characteristic and popular traditional dance of Jammu hills and performed in areas of Riasi, Pancheri, Sudhamahadev, Dudu-Basant Garh, Bhadarwah and Paddar in Kishtawar. *Kud* is essentially a ritualistic dance



performed to please local deities. For centuries this dance form has survived as a ritual dance at the shrines of local deities, during religious festivals, but in recent years there is a growing trend to perform it on occasions of festivities like marriage, child birth, crop cutting or any other community occasion.

*Kud* is a mass dance in which people of all ages participate. *Kud* dances are generally organized during evening hours and carry on till mid-night. "Prior to the start of the *Kudd* (fair) a *taal* called *Malhar* is played on the locally prepared drums called as *Dhouns*, so that people may hear and come together at the fixed venue"<sup>128</sup>. Because of chilly surroundings at these high altitudes, a huge bonfire is arranged in the centre of the dancing circle. This gives both warmth and light.

The *Kud* dance starts with the dancers assembling in a circle and then dancing with artistic movements of long steps and with loud sound *Oh-ho-oh- ho*. "The performers move two and a half step forward and a step backward. The perimeter of the circle goes on increasing as more and more people join the dance. Generally a romantic folk song, is repeated again and again"<sup>129</sup>. The dancers wave their arms in the air with such artistic grace as if the high trees are moving in the wind. Some-time they keep their hands on their hips, and then move the upper part of their body to the right and then to the left and give movement to their feet on the musical sound of the instruments. Keeping their hands away and eyesight fixed to other place, the folk dancers give out long sounds. They make movement ahead with raising steps.



With a little twist, the dancers turn back and repeat the same movement. The music of *Dhol* becomes brisk which is called *Dohra Dehkku* (double Dehkku). Then the movement of the dance exhilarates. In the dance language it is called *Treta* or *Dogra Dheku*. Early in the morning devotees or *chelas*, carrying bells of various sizes and weights lead the procession back to their locality<sup>130</sup>.

The folk dancers dress themselves in traditional gown like upper garment over which a *patka* in the manner of a belt is tied around the waist. Head gear of a turban and narrow trousers make the rest of the outfit. Instruments used during this dance include flutes, drums of various sizes, *narshingha*—S shaped copper or brass trumpet, *manjira*—sort of cymbal. It is the rhythm which controls the movement of participants.

Some folklorists have named the dance as *Dheku* but according to Kavi Rattan, the leading theatre personality of the Jammu and Kashmir, *Dheku* is the name for the entire ritual (*puja* and all) of which *Kud* is a part. In Bhadarwah, wherefrom *Kud* is supposed to have originated, dancing is greatly admired as being of cultural value. With the result almost all Bhadarwahis merrily take to *Kud* dance at any given opportunity.

## 12. Ghuraie Dance

The *Guraie dance* is performed by women of indigenous families in Bhadarwah area on the occasion of the festival of *Kanchoth* (akin to *Kareya Chouth*). This dance is also performed during weddings ceremonies and other joyous



occasions.

On the day of *Kanchouth*, womenfolk after worshipping the goddess Gouri, the consort of Lord Shiva, touch the feet of the family elders and take their blessings for the long life of their husbands and a happy married life. In the evenings the women dressed up in their best clothes, gather at one designated place and indulge in amusement with music and dance in a circle. The movement of their dance is lighter than kud dance.

At the end of each round of the dance they clap their hands slowly. They also sing songs in praise of queen *Kandni*, who had sacrificed her life for the welfare of her subjects. Other songs sung on the occasion contain prayer to the goddess Gouri for the long life of their husbands. In the evening women prepare and exchange with each other dishes such as fried cakes, *baras*, *pakodas* etc., and enjoy a sumptuous dinner with their family. After which the function of *Guraie dance* connected with *Kanchouth* festival comes to an end.

### 13. Sohari

It is a folk dance performed during harvesting season in the hilly areas of Jammu region. In the remote area of Kishtawar, Bhadarwah and Doda, there are peculiar ways of threshing and winnowing grains of wheat and barley from chaff. On a fixed day men and women reach the place where crop is to be thrashed. They make small bundles of harvested crop, put them in the centre and stand in two rows of five or six men on one side and five or six women opposite to them.



Then all of them take sticks tied with ghungroos in their hands. These sticks are called Chhini. Firstly, one party by taking a step beats the bundles of the crops with *Chhinnis* then the group standing opposite to it does the same movement. This movement of Sohari dance is followed by each folk dancer. The sound of the *gungrooes* is the only musical sound which provides rhythm to dancers. The people standing nearby sing songs: /*Sohari Saie Ramaa, Sohari Saie/ Shemer Bhela Sithia, Bharea Dave Khara*"/What a good time had been of Rama rule when one plough area could yield crop of One Khar Tapani/. The *Sohari* dance resembles the *Tapani* folk dance of Saurashtra, Gujarat <sup>131</sup>.

#### 14. Yuddha or Leela of Ram-Raawan-Naach

This dance is performed mainly in the eastern part of Bhadarwah in Bhalesa area during the month of November and December. It is the only folk dance in Jammu province which is performed by wearing masks. It is also called *Yuddha* or *Mehrekha dance*. Performed on the musical rhythm of *dhhol*, the two groups of folk dancers come running and stand opposite to each other. They have masks made of wood on their faces. One group has black woolen robes whereas the other group has white woolen robes. They have heavy *ghungroos* tied around their ankles. They also hold bow and arrow in their hands. The musical instruments include *dhouns* and flutes. On the rhythm of music one group steps forward with bow and arrow, while the other group steps back. Loud sounds of victory are made. The folk dancers narrate the epic of Ram and Ravana through their songs in their mother tongue.



## 15. Letri

This dance is performed while cutting the grass, hence known as labor dance. The person who wants to get the grass cut from his land invites the professional grass cutters and a drum player is also invited. The grass cutters, who can be 10 to 50 in number, start dancing, cutting grass on rhythm. The Hindus serve them with lunch and ghee, while the Muslims serve rice, sugar and ghee.

**15.1 Gujjar Dances:** Gujjars perform folk dances such as *Mehngo*, *Baaju Marna*, *Laadi*, *Lath Baazi*, *Talwar Baazi* on the occasions of *khutna* and marriage, *letri*, *laadi* and other occasions. Especially when the bridegroom and his bride for the first time enter the house, the Gujjars stand around their dwellings in a circle. Then with one or two persons standing with *dhol* and *algoze* in the centre of the circle, Gujjar dancers dressed in everyday attire comprising *tehmad*, long shirt and basket and a white turban on their heads, and holding long sticks in their hands, begin dancing at a low musical rhythm which slowly becomes fast. The dancers take a long step in forward direction, followed by a small step in the backward direction and then jump forward and start dancing. Some movements of this folk dance resemble with *Kud*. The specialty of this dance is that Gujjar women also sing songs on the occasion: "*Allaha Bismillah Behlu Turia*" *Tera Turn go bello, behlo turiay Tera Turn go bello, behlo turiay Behar - Kabilia, behlo turiay Sahib-jadia behlo turia, Bava Jinia, behlo turia*". Some senior ladies having money in their hands move it around the head of the folk dancers, as *barana*.



**15.2. Dances of Paharis:** The Pahari folk dances include *Menga*, *Lathbazi*, *Naach* and *Bolies* etc. These are very thrilling and attractive dances which are unique and distinct and performed only in Pahari belt of Poonch, Rajouri and Reasi.



# Cuisine of Jammu

## 1. Introduction

The Jammu cuisine has a distinct identity and reflects the diversity and uniqueness of the Dogra, Pahari, Gujjar, Gaddi Cultures which flourish and prevail over south of Pir Panjal ranges, Shivalik Hills, and areas bordering Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. Developed by local communities through ages keeping in mind the geographical (as agriculture is difficult) and climatic conditions, the Jammu cuisine is a collective experience of shared cooking practices, traditions and tastes marked with sub-regional variations.

The major factor shaping a cuisine is climate, which in large measure determines the availability of native raw materials, economic conditions, which affect trade and can affect food distribution, imports and exports, and religiousness or sumptuary laws, under which certain foods are required or proscribed<sup>132</sup>. Moreover high nutritional requirements of inhabitants, who eke out life in tough and demanding topography, are also accountable in preparing and modifying several dishes to provide heat, nutrition and energy to the maximum.

In this light the Jammu cuisine comprises simple, nutritious and wholesome dishes. The food is not extravagant and thus easy to digest and is marked by its simple method of preparation, combination and the sauté procedures followed. The Dogra cuisine is thus a perfect embodiment of *Sattavic* and *Rajasic* qualities<sup>133</sup>.



## 2. Dogra Cuisine

The everyday meal in Jammu region is usually *chapattis/tohda*, rice, dish of vegetables and a *daal* (lentil broth). Special dishes are cooked during festive, ceremonial occasions as well as pediatric and other dietary purposes. In areas with a pastoral tradition, milk and its products are liberally used in cooking.

Mother remains the storehouse of culinary knowledge which is handed down to the following generation. The traditional cuisine with all its varieties has remained the ultimate culinary reference for natives who till few decades back in absence of well developed communication and transport were dependent on locally grown/available food materials. The preferred taste of the people of Jammu varies from sub-region to sub-region, but food with a generous dose of spices like cardamom, cloves and chilies is very much the norm.

However during last two or three decades, fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs are available round the year, either grown locally or imported from outside districts and states. Despite the invasion of fast food culture and changed food habits of the people, those who have their roots in villages still relish the traditional recipes prepared from seasonal plant materials.

Since the vast region of Jammu has three distinct subdivisions such as plains adjoining Punjab, the *Kandi* belt and the *Pahaar*, with varied weather conditions, the cuisine is also marked by diversity.

## 2. Breads

Besides *roti/ chapatti/ fulka*, there is a lot of variation of



whole or refined wheat flour breads in Duggar. Sometimes *pranthalas* and *rotis* are baked in community *tandoors* (clay ovens). The *rotis* baked, sprinkled with *khaskhas* (poppy seeds) or sesame seeds for distinct flavoring, are enjoyed with ripe mangoes during summers. *Missi roti* made from a mix of cereals and grounded pulses is another healthy choice. *Tohdas* made of maize or *Bajra* flour and eaten with homemade butter and *Saag* are relished in winters especially. The people of this region are also very fond of fried dish like *Keur*—a type of pancake made from wheat flour lightly fried in ghee (clarified butter) and served with sugar and curd. It is a symbol of festivities and is served to the bride groom during the marriage. *Suchiyan*, *Luchiyan*, *Chille*, *Chiroliyan*, *Dhropras* (which are basically pancakes fried in ghee) are other varieties of pancakes. Another major treat worth mentioning in Dogra Cuisine is *Pahji* – an assortment of sweet snacks including *Rote* (type of sweet bread) *Kalah* and *Matthian* (deep fried flaky pancake) made of refined wheat, salt and *ajwain* seeds).

**2. 1. Babroo, Khameera, Thothru, Rote:** *Thothrus*, *Pathoras* and *Babroos* made from fermented dough and deep fried in ghee or oil are much sought after. For *Babroo*, one needs to knead flour with little yeast, salt and dry coriander seeds, and then the dough is set aside for a couple of hours. Finally, from the dough small balls are fried. Dogra women do not use a rolling pin and make round shaped *Babroos* with their hands (by applying little oil on hands). *Khameera* is a fermented whole wheat roti prepared in *tandoor*. Another type of cereal based sweet bread of Dogras is called *Rote*. It is made from wheat flour dough and jaggery and is prepared during certain



religious days as ritual food offering.

### 3. Madra

A quintessentially traditional and lip smacking-dish on the verge of extinction is *Madra*. It is rich spicy yogurt-based dish of lintels. Cooked mainly by communities living in hilly regions of Duggar, like Basohli, Bani, there are many varieties of *Madras*. It can be *Guchhiyein da Madra*, *Maaeyin da Madra* (*Urd Dal*), *Rajmein da Madra* (*red beans*), *Roungi da madra* (*kidney beans*), *Chollein da Madra* (*chick peas*) and *Mittha madra* (*sweet*).

*Chollein da Madra*: Method of Cooking—Chickpeas are soaked overnight and are boiled in the morning. 1/4 cup rice in one cup water and a cardamom are soaked separately, which is ground and kept aside. After heating the mustard oil in a *karahi*, *asafoetida* powder, cumin seeds, cinnamon, cloves, black cardamom, coriander powder and turmeric powder are added.

Afterwards boiled chickpeas and salt are added and stirred well. Two cups of beaten curd is then added to *karahi*, while stirring continuously for 10 minutes on medium heat. When it comes to boil, rice mixture is added to it and stirred. Finally 2-3 spoons of ghee are added and the dish is then cooked on low heat for half an hour. Then *Madra* is served hot with rice.

### 4. Sweet & Sour Dishes

In most of Duggar and Himachal Pradesh and for almost all communities, each meal as a matter of routine is accompanied by a tangier preparation. It is believed that tangy dishes combined with pulses help in the digestion of



protein rich food. Having many variants, such dishes which are accompaniment to the main meal, can be made out of raw mango, mango powder, tamarind or *tatri* (tartaric acid) or juices of variety of citric fruits such as hill lemon and a dash of jaggery/sugar.

**4.1. Ambal:** Ambal is a dish which made from pumpkin, jaggery and tamarind is favorite, especially during ceremonial and festive cooking. The word comes from Sanskrit word *amal* (sour) and is one of the six rasas in Ayurveda and can be found in *amla* (*Phyllanthus emblica*), tamarind, buttermilk, curds, mango (unripe), sour fruits and pickled vegetables.

*Method of Cooking:*

Ripe pumpkin (yellow) is cut into pieces, then in a *karahi*, mustard oil is heated and fenugreek seeds, *asafoetida* powder, dry red chilies and turmeric powder are put in hot oil. The pumpkin is added and cooked for sometime till its pieces become soft. A paste of tamarind with water is then slowly added to it in the *karahi*. After it simmers, jaggery is added and mixture is then cooked on low flame. The preparation time is of 15 to 30 minutes or more, depending upon the thin or thick consistency of the gravy. In areas like mahanpur, Basohli, a very thick paste like Ambal is served. Ambal is served hot after the main dishes in order of rice, followed by *Rajmah* (red beans), *Channa Dal* (Bengal gram split and skinned) has been served. It is usually consumed immediately after cooking. Ambal is preferably cooked in an iron *karahi*. Ambal is a common dish which is also must in ceremonial cooking at the time of *Saant* (the *Haldi* ceremony of Bride one day before marriage), as well as community feasts on occasions of religious ceremonies, and after death



rituals like *Dasmaan*. In traditional way of cooking food on hearths using fire wood is now followed in villages only during cooking for community feasts.

## 5. Maahni

*Maahni* is a classic tangier preparation made out of mangoes or tamarind. Served and savored together as a combination with rice, *maahni* is a tangy curry with a black gram flour base, with sweet and sour added to it. *Maahnis* are of many kinds. One seasonal dish of *maahni* is prepared out of half ripened mangoes. In fact such is the liberty in making *maahni* that it can be made from any kind of vegetable.

***Channa Maahni—Method of cooking:*** First step in cooking *maahni* is to patiently roast the *besan* (black gram flour) for few minutes on low heat to get rich brown color. Then oil is heated in a pan over low flame. Then red chili powder, *saunf* (fennel seeds), sugar, turmeric powder, nutmeg, cloves and mace are added. After frying the mixture for some time, black grams are added and cooked for five to six minutes. Then mango powder is added and after cooking for another minute, the roasted *besan* mixed with water is poured into the pan and stirred well and brought to a boil. When the curry starts to thicken, jaggery, green chilies, salt and remaining water are added and cooked for ten to fifteen minutes.

## 6. Auriya

A dish unique to Dogras, *Auriya*, is a kind of mustard sauce made of curd and potatoes spiced and fermented with rye. ***Method of Cooking:*** Crushed rye seeds are mixed in curd and left overnight for fermentation. Then boiled potatoes,



cut into small cubes, along with turmeric and slat are mixed and added to the mixture. *Auriya* is served as a side dish.

**6.1. Kadi:** *Kadi* is a thick spicy broth of *basen* with curd seasoned with cumin, *heeng* (*asafoetida*), red chili powder and floating *pakor*as (vegetable fritters) in it. This dish cooked in variety of ways is usually eaten with rice or *roti*.

*Method of Cooking Pakora Kadi:*

To make *pakor*as a batter of pourable consistency is made out of *besan* mixed with small pieces of vegetables like onions, potatoes, red chili powder, salt and water. The batter in small quantities is then fried in hot oil. The fried *pakor*as are then soaked in water. *Pakor*as of plain *besan* without mixing any vegetables are also prepared.

The next step is to beat the curd to a smooth paste and add *besan* into it while constantly stirring the mixture to avoid lumps. Then in a *karahi*, oil is heated till smoking hot. Mustard seeds, cumin seeds and in the last *methi* (fenugreek seeds) are added into oil and allowed to splutter for few seconds. The flame is lowered and *besan*-curd mixture, salt and water are added and constantly stirred to avoid curdling of curd in the mixture. The broth is then cooked for some time till it attains consistency. Water is squeezed out of *pakor*as which are added to the boiling broth.

**7. Winter Lunch—***Kulath ki khatti daal* and Rice

*Kulath* (horse gram) is soaked overnight by adding salt and *asafoetida* powder. Then next morning it is boiled on low heat for 45 minutes or more. Boiled *kulath* is meshed softly with a ladle. A thick paste of tamarind and water is made and kept separately. After heating ghee in a *karahi*, *asafoetida*



powder is added. It is followed by dry red chilies, red chili powder and turmeric powder. Then *kulath daal* is poured in it. The tamarind paste is added while the *daal* simmers. The *kulath* is cooked on low flame for 15 minutes. It is served hot with rice. *Kulath* is considered as natural remedy for stones in the kidneys and gall bladder.

**7. 1. Kulath Khichadi:** The *Kulath Khichadi* is also a popular dish in winter season. The overnight soaked *kulath* is mixed with rice, salt and water and cooked. Some people put *tadka* (tampering) over the cooked *khichadi* for taste. This *khichadi* is generally eaten in combination with curd.

## 8. Dahi Wale Aaloo

*Dahi wale Aaloo* (potato) is easy to make and a quick dish. In *kandi* areas where barring few months of rain, leafy vegetable used to be scarce commodity, this dish with simple taste and flavor, is one of the common preparations.

*Method of Cooking:* Potatoes are boiled and cut into pieces with hands. Mustard oil is heated in a pan (Dogra cuisine is mostly cooked in mustard oil). Dry whole red chilies, cumin seeds, *asafoetida* powder, are added in it and fried for some time. Then grated ginger and turmeric powder are added. It is followed by two big grated tomatoes and then the mixture is cooked on low heat. Once tomatoes are cooked, potatoes are added and some dry mango powder is sprinkled along with red chili powder and salt. One cup of curd is beaten and poured on the potatoes. After mixing well, the dish is covered and left for 10 minutes. It is the kind of food which locals also take during fasts. As part of normal day to day meals, it is served with *rotis*, *babroos* etc.



## 9. Snacks

Snacks are portions of food often smaller than a regular meal. They are generally eaten between meals. In Jammu region, traditionally, snacks are prepared from ingredients commonly available in the home and passed on for generations. All households cull out snacks for everyday or special needs. Stored in variety of earthen wares, glass jars, and later in tin canister, homemade snacks are a great attraction for one and all, especially for growing children.

**9. 1. Patrode:** A popular snack served in hilly areas during rainy season is *Patrode*. They are made from leaves of *arbi* (*Colocasia*) or *kachalu* (*Taro*). The leaves are washed properly. A thick paste of *besan*, water, red chili powder, chopped green chilies, cumin seeds and salt is made. Then one full leaf is taken and is kept upside down. Applying *besan* paste on the back of the leaf, another leaf is put, upside down, on the first leaf smeared with *besan* paste. The back of second leaf is covered with the paste. Then third leaf is put on it, covering its back with paste, followed by a fourth leaf. This stack of leaves is rolled and closed with toothpicks. Rolls are then steamed, fried, cut and served hot with green *chutney*.

**9.2. Seul ke Patrode:** *Patrode* are prepared from healthy leaves of *Seul* / *Chenopodium album* / and paste of *besan* of pouring consistency is made. Then 2-3 medium sized onions, one piece of garlic, green chilies and salt according to taste are ground and all the ingredients are added to the dough of *besan*. Then one leaf of *Seul* is taken, keeping its lower side upwards; the dough is applied over



it properly. The leaf is covered with another leaf in reverse manner and again paste is put over it and this process is repeated for 4-6 leaves. Sides of the leaves are folded inside and then rolled like bedding. Paste is applied on its all sides while folding. For making it one piece, it is wrapped in a leaf of turmeric and tied with thread. Then on a big pan or *tavaa*, small amount of mustard oil it is added. It is then cooked on slow fire for 5-10 minutes and served along with *chapatti*.

## 10. Dabarar and Bhalla

Any traveler coming to the Jammu and Kashmir will have an excellent opportunity to relish *dabarar* which are similar to south Indian *vadas*. *Bhallas* are made from gram/urda dal which is soaked and mashed and then deep fried in small balls and served with grated radish, tamarind *chutney* in *doonas* (leaf cups) at Lakhanpur and Samba or other roadside eateries.

Another variety is *Dahi Bhalla* where dumplings made out of the paste of urda/moong dal combinations are fried and put in beaten curd. The secret to soft and melt in the mouth *bhallas* or *vadas* lies in beating the *vada* batter till it is light and airy. The fried dumplings are put in water for some times before mixing with curd. The curd for *Dahi Bhalla* is thick, creamy, chilled and sweetened with sugar. At the time of serving, green and sweet *chutney* s are spooned over them followed by a generous sprinkling of roasted cumin powder, red chili powder, *chaat masala*, black salt, *sev* and coriander leaves.

## 11. Pakoras

It is one popular fried snack (fritter) which is made



in all seasons and on all occasions. Right from wayside tea stalls, kiosks, village *halwai* shops, to special outlets exclusively selling pakoras, to high end restaurants, pakoras are available everywhere. The word *pakora* derives from Sanskrit *pakvavta*- which means cooked-small dumplings. These are made by dipping vegetables like onion, *baingan-brinjal*-eggplant, potato, spinach, *paneer*, cauliflower, tomato, chili pepper or occasionally bread, in batter of black gram flour and deep-fried in mustard oil. The most popular varieties savoured in Jammu are *palak pakora*, (spinach), *paneer pakora*, made from soft cheese, *pyaz pakora*, made from onion, and *aaloo pakora*, made from potato and *nadruo* pakoras, made from lotus stems.

To add flavor to *pakoras*, sometimes *ajwaian*- carom seeds, are also added in *besan*. The wayside eateries at Nandani, Suketar village on Srinagar-Jammu highway are famous for pakoras of locally made *paneer*. *Pakoras* are being relished as a popular snack in Kashmir and Ladakh regions also. Nowadays served as snacks and appetizers in marriage feasts, *pakoras* have emerged as fast food and are available in restaurants as take-out snack for modern generations.

## 12. Tricholi & Other Snacks

During Lohri, *tricholi* a type of snack is prepared by mixing *til* (sesame), *gur* (jaggery), and popcorn and is relished by children and grownups alike. On *Makar Sankranti*, *kichadi* made by boiling newly harvested rice and black gram dal is eaten with dollops of desi ghee. The mothers prepare *Puhgga* a type of prasad from *til*, *gur* and sometimes *khoya* (thickened and dried milk) on the occasion



of *Puhgga fast* which is undertaken by Dogra womenfolk for longevity of their children. On *Janmashtami*, *falahaar* or fruit based food is taken. A special food *Sund Panjiri* is made from roasted *seul*, dry fruit, sugar and grated coconut and made into prasad.

**12.1. Other Popular Urban Snacks:** Over the last few years, Jammuites, and citizens in other parts of the region especially the young generation, have begun to relish exotic cuisines. Jammu city offers both ethnic and contemporary snacks. A special mention can be made of salted *seviyaan*, boiled black grams, *samosas*, *kachalu*, *kaladi kulcha*, *gulgalas*, *rajmah kulcha*, etc. *Achars* (pickles) at Manthal enroute Udhampur are also famous.

**12. 2. Kalalri:** Dogras are also fond of *kaladi*, a type of dried milk cheese. *Kaladis* are also one of the favorite food items of Paharis and Gujjars. It is prepared with cottage cheese, milk cream (*malai*) and water with help of a small cup-shaped pot. *Kaladi* is served with *chutney*. *Kaladi Kulcha* is also a popular snack sold on *rehris* and kiosks in Jammu and other cities.

**12.3. Masala Nutri (Soya Nuggets) Kulcha:** A modern day snack, the combination of Masala Soya nuggets and *kulcha*, has emerged as a popular fast food choice which is relished by everyone especially the youth and school going children. The boiled soya nuggets (popular with one particular brand name *Nutri*) are squeezed to draw water and put in masala made out of cut or grated onions and tomatoes fried in oil with sprinkling of ingredients like *jeera*, ginger, tomato



puree, soya sauce, with final touches of coriander leaves. The *masala* soya nuggets are placed in a *kulcha* like a sandwich or simple served with bread slices and *chutney*.

### 13. Chutney

Also called as *chatni*, it is made from a variable of spices, vegetables or fruits. Based on a wide range of recipes and preparation methods, *chutneys* can range from wet to dry—coarse to fine—and they can be combined with a wide variety of foods or used for dipping. In Jammu and its adjoining region of Himachal Pradesh, *chutney* is a regular accompaniment to the staple meal.

**Timbroo chutney:** It is a specialty of hilly areas of Jammu. Immortalized in folk songs, the *timbroo* chutney is prepared in hilly areas and is also very popular.

**Barah ki chutney:** The *chutney* is made from *Rhododendron* (*Rhododendron arboretum* Sm.) flowers locally known as *barah*. Growing wild in hilly areas of Jammu and Himachal Pradesh, this flower is red/maroon in color and slightly sour to taste. For making *chutney*, a paste of fresh flowers of *barah*, onion, mint leaves, basil leaves, green chilies and salt are used.

### 14. Drinks

Many kinds of drinks form an integral part of the Jammu cuisine. With a climate as varied and extreme as Jammu region, the people require myriad options to keep their thirst appropriately quenched according to the weather conditions, be it a steaming cup during winters or a cold glass of soft



drink or beverage in the summers. Different sub-regions in the Jammu area serve different drinks made with an eclectic assortment of ingredients including local spices, flavors and herbs. Mostly homemade, these drinks add to the delicious cuisine of Jammu.

*Lassi* or *chhachh*, *roh* (cane juice), *kanji* (made with water, carrots, beetroot and mustard seeds), *shkanjavi* (lemonade), *jaljeera*, *sattu* drink (made from roasted barley and jaggery) are popular choices to sooth and quench the thirst during hot summers. In *kandi* areas of Jammu, it is a tradition to serve jaggery mixed water to the visitors who would tread long distance on foot in hot summers. In towns there is a practice to serve *sharbats* and also *baanta* (the name comes from codd-neck heavy glass bottle in which a round marble (locally called as *baanta*) seals the mouth of the bottle by the pressure of the contents, instead of a cap. The distinctive character of the bottle has led to the drink being called *Baanta* in Jammu. This soda mixed with milk or lime, is a popular drink in Jammu and still finds many takers who prefer it over a variety of branded colas and juices.

## 15. Tea

The Dogras, Gujjars, Paharis and other communities of Jammu are also fond of drinking green tea (*desi chaa*) a tasty concoction of green tea leaves, boiled over a long period of time and mixed with *gur* or sugar and milk. The best part of this beverage is its flavoring with ginger and cardamom which adds a spicy flavor. Sometimes *chuharaas* (dry dates) are also added along with baking soda which helps in extracting pink colour from the ingredients.

There are umpteen types of teas in Jammu region where



many trees, plants and their parts serve as substitute for tea. Bark of some trees like Himalayan Yew locally called *Barmi* and Madagascar Plum locally named *Kakoocha* is utilized by Gujjars, Bakerwals, Paharis and Dogras as tea substitute. Chips of barks are dried and kept as substitute of tea and used as beverage.

Leaves of trees like Wild Olive locally called *Kahuaa* and Indian Cinnamon locally named as *Tajpatter* is also used by some tribes as tea substitute in the hills. Roots of several herbs like Adder's Tongue locally called *Malchhain*, *Machran* or *Masloon*, Pink Cinquefoil locally named as *Tarohd chaa*, Crane's bill flower locally named as *Ratanjot* are equally popular tea substitutes in addition to leaves named above. Bark of Oriental Plane, *Platanus orientalis* locally called *Booin* or *Booni* is used as tea by locals in Kishtawar<sup>134</sup>.

**Dushanda:** *Dushanda* is a concentrated drink made out of number of herbs which are put together and boiled in water and reduced to an extract. It is given to kids or adults suffering from cold and cough.

## 16. Sweet Dishes

Special sweets are prepared on the occasion of festivals like *Basant Panchami*, *Baisakhi*, *Rut Rareh*, *Deyali* and *Eid* and also during festive occasions like marriage, birth of child and *munnan*. *Mittha Madra* is a favorite sweet dish. It is cooked from milk, dry fruits and semolina. *Mittha Patth* (Sweet Rice): This form of local dessert comprising caramelized *saunf* flavored rice, cooked in desi ghee, liberally mixed with raisins and dry fruits and *khoya*, is consumed on



festive occasions, marriages etc. *Kheer*, prepared from milk by adding in it some rice and dry fruits, is one of the famous sweet foods of Dogras and served in almost all special occasions and festivals. *Sri Pulao* is another traditional caramelized rice dish having a liberal mix of dry fruits that was popular amongst the nobility and elite of Jammu society. A sweet dish also forms an important part of *shraahds* or *pitra puja*n (remembering of the ancestors on marked days of lunar calendar).

### 17. Sweetmeats

*Patisa*—This special sweet of Jammu is a delightful preparation of *besan*, sugar, desi ghee and flavored with cardamom seeds. If served soft and fresh, it melts in mouth. The *Patisa* being made at Kud has become an attraction for local and other commuters on Jammu-Srinagar highway, who make it a point to buy *Patisa* at Kud as a local *sougaat*—local specialty owing to its special taste and flavor brought on by water from the local spring.

*Sund* is another sweet attraction which signifies festivities; be it cultural festivals or birth of a child. It is a preparation of nuts and dry fruits like almonds, *kaju* (cashew nut), grated coconut, *chhuahra* (dry dates) and a variety of gums extracted from plants and trees, sugar and lightly fried in ghee. When *sund* is poured in hot milk it is called *kaahda* and is considered good for lactating mothers. *Barfi*—The Jammu region also boasts of a variety of *burfi* made from abundant supply of locally available *khoya*. *Palang Tarod* (Milk Cake)—made from fresh milk and sugar is another specialty which is much sought after. *Mesu*—a sweet prepared with *besan*, sugar and ghee is also somewhat peculiar to this



region. The delicious *chocolate barfi*, a preparation unique to the district of Jammu needs a mention here.

*Gulra* —is another sweet preparation made of rice flour, ghee and dry fruits. *Pahji* is generally presented on the occasion of marriage or any other auspicious celebration and is packed in a wicker or cane basket. *Patasa*s—made from treacle (sugar syrup) are given on auspicious occasions. *Tarkira Halwa* made from *Tarkira* (dried extract of soaked wheat grains) is a sweet wholesome delicacy. The local cuisine has got a diverse range of sweets which truly complement the distinct seasons and year-round cultural celebrations.

## 18. Seera

Mostly eaten in winter season or after doing heavy work, *Seera* is the preparation of wheat grain. Wheat grains are soaked in water for one week, with regular change of water of the soaked grains to avoid off-flavour. Soaked grains are ground properly, water is added to it and strained to get a white coloured fluid. The fluid is then put in a muslin cloth which is tied and hung so that water drips down to leave behind a semi solid stuff which is then cut in small portions, put in open under sunlight until it dries completely and becomes solid. This is known as *Seera*.

Stored in air tight container, *Seera*, whenever required is dissolved in equal amount of sugar in water to make a batter of fluid consistency. The batter is then added to a good amount of hot *ghee* in a pan and stirred continuously to prevent it sticking to the base of the pan. The mixture is cooked till light brown. It can be served in breakfast or supper times as a sweet dish.



## 19. Tadka/Chounk/Tempering

Tempering is a cooking technique and garnish used in the Indian cuisines in which whole spices (and sometimes also other ingredients such as minced ginger root or garlic pods) are fried briefly in oil or ghee to liberate essential oils from cells and thus enhance their flavours, before being poured together with the oil, into a dish.

Ingredients typically used for tempering include cumin seeds, black mustard seeds, fennel seeds, fresh green chilies, dried red chilies, fenugreek seeds, *asafoetida*, cloves, chopped onion, garlic, or *tejpatta*. When using multiple ingredients for a *chaunk* they are often added in succession, with those requiring longer cooking added earlier, and those requiring less cooking added later. Tempering may be prepared at the beginning of cooking, before adding the other ingredients for a curry or similar dish, or it may be added to a dish at the end of cooking, just before serving.<sup>135</sup> Tempering is also important aspect of Dogra cuisine. Other than standard forms of *tadkas*, Dogra cuisine boasts of a typical kind of *tadka* called *Dhuni*. It is a tempering practice whereby few drops of mustard oil are poured over burning charcoal which is immediately put into the pot containing the freshly prepared and covered with a lid, so that the fumes which adds smoky aroma, are absorbed properly in the dish. Burnt coal is taken out at the time of serving. *Dhuni* is a very common tampering used in traditional dishes like *maahni*, *ambal*, and also when citrus fruits like *kimb* are eaten as snacks<sup>136</sup>.

## 19. Non-Vegetarian Food

Dogras cuisine is basically vegetarian. Other than



Brahmins, Rajputs and other communities among Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims take non-vegetarian food. *Khatta meat*, a preparation of goat meat curry cooked with sour pomegranate seeds or lime juice is one dish that has distinct Dogra stamp. There is also a practice of cooking *shikar* (meat of hunted wild life) in villages and remote areas where hunting of wild animals, birds like *Para*-wild goat, *Kalmuyae*- Partridge, wild boars etc, is an old hobby amongst the young and the old. At present times hunting as a sport has declined significantly due to militancy in Jammu and Kashmir and local calls of the *shikaris* (hunters) is at the verge of extinction.

The old time culture of roadside vendors selling *siree* ( Meat of Goat's head), *kharode*-trotters, *Ojari*-offal and boiled eggs, which once attracted a number of daily customers, is losing popularity. The new generation is drawn to a large number of kiosks dishing out non-vegetarian items like fried and *tandoori* chicken, mutton *kababs* and varieties of fish items. Today the growing tribe of non-vegetarians in society has a number of options to choose from a large fray of easy to eat and take away non-vegetarian snacks which include varieties of chicken and mutton dishes along with *tandoor* baked *Handi Biryani*.

## 20. Food Items out of Forest Products

Traditional Jammu cuisine is also famous for making the best use of the minor forest produce which the nature has bestowed upon this region. Although forest foods do not usually provide a complete diet, they make a critical contribution to the food supply.

*Gucchiyan* (morels) a type of dried mushroom which is much sought after in the whole world for its exotic taste and is used to prepare *Gucchi Pulao*. *Anardana* ( pomegranate seeds), *Kasrod* (fern stalks), *Kachnar* ( *Bauhunia* flowers)



and a variety of tubers called *Tarad* add to the richness and diversity of the gourmet. The cuisine has distinct place for a host of pickle preparation made from *Aonla* (Indian gooseberry), raw mango, *galgal* (Hill Lemon) *dhiyo* (Monkey Jack) *lasooda* (Glue berry) and *kasrod* etc. The Dogras are very fond of eating a variety of greens or *Saags*; *sarson*, *baathua*, *chileri*, *cheerma palak*, *saunf* or aniseed leaves, *methi* or fenugreek, carrot leaves or mixes of many of these.

## 21. Exotic Dishes

**Phkudi/Bhruni:** (edible fig) is the dish made from tender leaves of the fig (*Ficus carica*). For its preparation, tender leaves are boiled in an earthen pot for 10-15 minutes till soft and then ground well. Heat mustard oil in a pan. Add coriander seeds, cumin seeds, red chilies, *asafoetida* and turmeric powder, heat till brown and put boiled buds to it. Add salt and spices according to taste. Cook it on slow flame for 5 minutes and serve along with chapatti.

**Kachnar /Karayaei:** Boil the buds of *Karayaei/Kachnar* (*Bauhinia variegata* Linn.) for 10-15 minutes till they become soft. Heat mustard oil in a pan. Add coriander seeds, cumin seeds, red chilies, *asafoetida* and turmeric powder, heat till brown and put boiled buds to it. Add salt and spices according to taste. Cook it on slow fire for 5 minutes and serve along with chapatti. *Kachnar* flowers are also used in making *raita*, locally called as *Aasara*.

**Chhachha:** (Crushed Mangoes) In Kandi areas of Jammu where due to semi hilly terrain and dry hot summer season,



there is shortage of green vegetables, the mango fruit in its various stages of ripeness is used in many forms. One of the popular mango dishes is *chhachha*. Raw mangoes (*Mangifera indica* Linn.) are used for making *chhachha*. Onion and raw mangoes are taken in equal amount, peeled and ground together coarsely. Chilies, salt and sugar are added to taste. The other dishes made out of mangoes are *maahni*, *chutneys*, pickles and preserves.

***Kasrod di Sabji***: Vegetable fern/ *Kasrod* /Lungru (*Diplazium esculentum*) available in hill areas of Jammu and Himachal Pradesh looks like stems with curled top and with hairy growth over it.

For its preparation, hair are removed from *Kasrod* stems with the help of cotton cloth and then cut into small pieces after washing. It is fried in an open pan with slightly more amount of mustard oil. A pinch of *asafoetida* is also added along with other spices. Curd can also be added at the time of frying.

***Guchiyyan (dried mushroom - black morel)***: Another popular exotic dish is *Guchiyyan*, usually added as an ingredient in *pulao* as it grows naturally in forests and cannot be cultivated; it is a priced commodity (approximately seven to eight thousand rupees per 100 grams) and makes an excellent dish with mountain potatoes (Pahadi Aaloo).

***Saffron or Kesar***: It is extensively used to flavor sweet dishes and for its anti-oxidant benefits. Though Kashmir is famous



for Saffron, but Saffron of Kishtawar is also considered good.

## 22. Saag

Any leaf based dish is called *Saag*. In Jammu and Kashmir *Saag* dishes which are almost a regular part of everyday food, are prepared from many kinds of vegetables and wild plants. Some of the popular *Saags* are as under: *sarson*, *bathua*, *chileri*, *cheerma palak*, *saunf* or aniseed leaves, *methi* or fenugreek, carrot leaves or mixes of many of these.

***Phafru da Saag:*** (Dogri-Daraiyu/*Phafru*-Himachal) Buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum* Moench.) leaves known as *Phafru* are available in the hilly areas. For making *Saag*, buckwheat leaves are washed, cut into fine shreds and then boiled by adding salt till soft. After boiling a paste is made. Then mustard oil is heated in a pan; coriander seeds and red chilies are added to the heated oil, and then paste of buckwheat leaves is added. It is cooked for some time and served hot with rice or *chapattis*; it tastes a bit sour.

***Kulfe da Saag:*** Pigweed plant, locally called *Kulfa* (*Portulaca oleracea* Linn) is wildy grown near water channels. It is bit spongy and contains gum like substance. Pigweed leaves are washed, cut into fine shreds, boiled by adding salt till soft and ground into paste. Mustard oil is heated in a pan; cumin seeds and red chilies are added to the heated oil and then a paste of pigweed leaves is added. It is cooked for some time



and served hot. *Kulfe da Saag* tastes a bit sour and is served with rice or *chapatti*.

***Bicchu Bbuti/ Aynni da Saag*:** Leaves of *bicchu buti/ Aynni* (*Unicu parviflora* Roxb.) are relished as vegetable. Boiled and mashed leaves (100 gm) are cooked in oil with spices like cumin seeds (1/2 tsp), coriander powder and turmeric powder. It is locally called as *bicchu buti da Saag*.

### 23. Community Feasts

Dogras are fond of community feasts known as *dhaams* which are organized on the occasion of marriage, birth, religious congregations and *meils*. The feast hosted to celebrate the arrival of a bride is called as *chaab*.

Generally vegetarian food is prepared in a *dhaam* and served on *pattals* (leaf plates) and *doonas* (leaf Cups) made from leaves of a broad leaf tree or a creeper. The dishes in a *dhaam* generally include *channa daal*, *rajmah* and *ambal* and are served with rice followed by *mittha pahtt* (sweetened rice flavored with black pepper and raisins). The food is prepared on a long firewood *chullaha* dug up in the ground (*dahaan*) and cooked in large, thick brass pots (*sagle*) which bestow the food a distinct aroma. The professional cooks employed for cooking community feasts are called *sayaan*, who are normally Brahmins.

In such community feasts people sit in a file on the floor and the dishes—served on *pattal* and *doona*—come in sequence; from neutral, to sour, to sour-sweet, and end, as the tradition goes with a sweet dish.



## 24. Saant Meal— Rajma, Ambal, Chana Dal and Rice

Jammu's *rajmah-chawal* (red beans and rice) are world famous. Dogra weddings are incomplete without serving *rajmah* to the guests. On the day of *saant* (*haldi* ceremony), the lunch menu generally comprises *rajmah*, *ambal* and rice. *Rajmah* (red beans) are soaked overnight and boiled in the morning, in a *karahi* with hot mustard oil and then whole *masala*— *tejpattar* (bay leaf), cumin seeds, dry red chili, black cardamom, clove—is added. After the *masala* ingredients splutter and become brown, grated ginger and tomatoes are added and the mixture is left to cook. In the end turmeric powder, red chili powder and coriander powder are added and allowed cook on low heat. The boiled *rajmah* (not the water) are meshed softly with a ladle and added into the *masala* mixture along with water and salt and then allowed to cook on low heat. For *tadka* (tempering), ghee (clarified butter) is heated in a small pan, and *asafoetida* powder and red chili powder are added and immediately poured over the *rajmah* mixture.

## 25. Gujjar Cuisine

Gujjars are mostly dependent on milk products as their staple food besides cereals, wheat and maize. Most of the Gujjars are vegetarians. But some are non-vegetarians as well. The favorite dishes of Gujjar are “*Maki / Bajara ki Roti*”, *Ganhar / Sarssoon ko Sag*, *Lassi*, *Kalari*, *Maani*, *Seera*. It is surprising that Gujjar are mostly vegetarians. They are fond of *gur*. They like the feast of rice with curd and sugar.



**25.1. Pahari Cuisine:** Maize is the staple food of Paharis. Although local variety of rice is available at certain places but Paharis prefer *Makki-ki-Roti* and *Sarson ka Saag*. A mixture of salt and chili or chutneys of Timbroo and Mint are used as accompaniments. Meat is cooked on festive occasions. In the breakfast called as *naharhi*, the preferred combination is that of left over rice from previous night and milk/curd and *gur* or sugar. In poor families breakfast comprises *sattu* mixed with *kehwa* (black tea). Traditionally cooking is done in earthen pots which are fashioned out of locally available variety of clays.

## **26. Padari Cuisine<sup>137</sup>**

The main crops of *Padar* are *kabru*, *kodra*, *cheeni*, *bhabhri* (*seul*), *grim*, *draioue*, maize and rice. There is very less production of wheat in the area. Potato was introduced here in last decades of 19<sup>th</sup> century. *Jeera*, *feetae*, *thaanguli* are also other edible items. Sometimes back, the leaves of *chukri* plant were dried and powdered and eaten as *roti*. But this practice is now limited to very remote areas of *Padar*. But *dhaar saag* and *gatthoue* are still in use. The *rajmah* production in the area is limited. *Roti* of *grim* and *saag* combination is also popular in *Padaris*.

The *Padari* eat a lot of *kabru* along with *lassi* (buttermilk) with great relish. At the time of festivals and ceremonies like marriage, it is a tradition to make *mandas*. Unlike iron *tavaas* (voks) of plain areas, *Padaris* use stone *tavaas* for making *mandas*. Wheat and water mixture of pouring consistency is spread on a hot stone *tavaa*. When it is done, the thin layer



which rises little above the *tavaa*, is taken out and the other is put. A *manda* is made out of two such layers. First rice is put in the *thali* and then *manda* is placed on top of it and is eaten with Ghee. *Luchhiyaans* are also prepared during festivities. The *roti* made after mixing milk is called *dhodhi roti* in *Padar* and is eaten like a sweetmeat. In the area, milk of *chambari* (mix breed of Yak and Cow) which in thick consistency is preferred over cow's milk. *Paneer* and *ghee* is also made out of it.

*Padaris* are both vegetarians and non-vegetarians and eat three times in a day. Morning meal is called as *kallu* or *nahari*, mid-day meal as *rihni* and dinner is known as *behal*. Like many highland communities, *Padaris* regularly partake alcohol which is of many varieties. Locals here also like to use walnut oil and honey which is known for its high quality. *Sattu* (roasted barley) is a popular food which is eaten with salted tea or *lassi*.

The use of rice is done in three ways. One is normally boiled rice, the other somewhat watery preparation and the third is *khichadi*.

The *Bhots* (Buddhists) also eat three time in a day. The mid-day meal is called as *ken* or *shod*, while dinner is *gongal*. They prefer *tokur*, *karwa* and *thurpi*. *Tokur* is made out of *kobru* flour. *Thupa* (*Ladakhi Thupka*) is cooked by boiling wheat flour and taken with mixing water. *Bhots* are fond of *chhaang*—local barley made fermented drink and sour in taste.



# Costumes of Jammu

## 1. Introduction

It is an established fact that geographical, social, economical, cultural and racial factors influence the choice of raw materials and their fabrication into finished products in forms of costumes and ornaments. The shapes, designs, decorative elements also exhibit strong racio-cultural elements which have been undergoing metamorphosis and conditioning under the micro geo-climatic environments in different mountain terrains, giving rise to distinct local identity<sup>138</sup>.

In areas such as Paddar, Kishtawar, Bhadarwah in the upper Himalayas, with moderate to severe winter conditions there is a judicious mix of woollen and cotton clothes with a distinct form and design. Whereas those parts of Jammu region situated in the sub-mountainous belt by the slopes of Shivalik ranges and sharing natural borders with plains of Punjab have since olden times carried the influence of north Indian plains on costumes and ornaments. This influence has further percolated into the mid-Himalayan valleys, into the capital towns and other centers of feudal administration of the erstwhile princely states. This outer belt mainly belongs to cotton people who used to wear hand-woven coarse cloth for most part of the year but in present times have shifted to mill-made varieties.

## 2. Dogra Costumes

The best possible glimpses of elite Dogra costumes and ornaments of the medieval and late medieval period are



available from Pahari miniature paintings. The dresses and ornaments, depicted therein were actually in use among the elite class of feudal society at that age. From the miniatures paintings we learn that male costumes of feudal aristocracy included a simple *jama* or *gehardar jama* or a side fastening frock coat, with a sash round the waist. The head dress included a turban, sloping backwards, with a cross band.

The female costumes constituted a *choli*, a tight-fitting bodice covering the breast, and flowing ghaghra-like shirt, over which a transparent sari was worn. One end of the sari covered the head. From some miniatures, especially those of the Jammu school, it is gathered that the women also wore *sutthan*, made of stripped cotton, with a bodice and flowing over-garment of silk or muslin, known as *peshwaj*<sup>139</sup>. Sometimes head is shown with a dupatta, which falls in graceful folds on the *ghaghra* or *peshwaj*.

The present day costumes of the common people of Dogra region mostly comprise plain cotton clothes. The dress habits of the people have undergone radical changes under the new consumerist pressure. Readymade clothes are freely available in the village shops. These are increasingly preferred by people for being cheaper and of wide variety, over the traditional tailor-made clothes.

The traditional male dress constitutes *kurta* or *kameez*, which is a plain shirt, with or without collar, made of mill made cotton or mixed fabric. Over the shirt, cotton waist-coat, called *basket* (popular word for vest or waist-coat) or *sadri* is worn. People wear buttoned-up (*bandh-gale-ka*) coat or collared coat, made up of woolen cloth such as *pattu*. But, it is occasionally used and not as a routine. The *pyjama* is made of mill made cotton or *khaddar*. Some wear *churidaar*



or *raibdar* or *khulli mohri-ka pyjama*.

In informal settings or working in fields, people wear homemade *kachha* (loose underwear) and *bandi* or *baniyan*. In areas bordering the Punjab plains, farmers use *tehmad*, a cloth worn around waist like a sarong or *lungi*. The Brahmins wear a *dhoti*, which is of thin white cotton material and drawn up through the legs. The Dogra ladies wear a *sutthan* and a *kurta* or *kameez* and head covered with a *dupatta*.

**2.1. Giddi:** Reminiscent of olden days, the only unstitched garment other than *dhoti* which is still in use in conservative households of Hindu Dogras and worn by women is called as *Giddi*. This is a cotton *chaddar*, generally white in color, and is wrapped around the body with one shoulder bare.

### 3. Wedding Attire

Traditionally the Dogra bride is dressed in a shirt, *churidaar* and a *dupatta*. The color of the dress is usually red or pink or yellow, because these colors are considered as auspicious and symbolize prosperity, fertility and *saubhagya* (marital bliss). The bridal dress is highly ornate and decorated with gold and silver embroidery. Nowadays *saris* and *lehngas* are also in fashion. The bride also dons elaborate and beautiful ornaments primarily made of gold and precious stones. Her hair is plaited and decorated with jewelry pieces like *tikka*. She also wears a nose ring called as *natth*. The bride in Duggar also supports a *chuhnd* (*ghunghat*-veil), draped modestly over her hair as a sign of respect to the deities worshipped and the elders present.

The groom, according to his caste, wears a *dhoti* or *pyjama*, and *kurta*. The Rajputs wear a *churidaar* and *achkan-*



*sherwani* which also has subtle but intricate embroidery. The color of *dhoti*, *pyjama* and the *achkan* is usually white, off-white or beige. In Duggar, the groom's head gear is a turban on which the *Sehra* is tied up. The groom always carries a sword as part of his wedding outfit.

Though the bride and the groom clearly steal the show with their best outfits, the families of the bride and the groom, friends, relatives and guests also wear grand clothes. Thus, a typical Dogra wedding is a very colorful affair!

#### 4. Costumes of Gujjars/Bakerwals

It is generally held that Gujjars had migrated from Rajasthan, Gujarat and Kathiawar to Jammu and Kashmir a long time back. Having lost their links with original homes, the Gujjars are firmly planted in Jammu area and parts of Kashmir and form an integral part of its socio-cultural milieu. Those among the Gujjars, who adopted goat-breeding as their vocation, came to be known as Bakerwals. A Gujjar is easily recognizable from a distance because of the peculiarity of his dress.

**Safa:** The Gujjar adorns a turban on his head. The turban is made of simple, white muslin cloth of three to five meters in length. Gujjar children wear a Gujjar *topi*, akin to *kantop* having a peaked top made of different colours. **Kameez:** Gujjars wear a long or loose shirt which comes to their knees. The *kameez* as it is known is mostly colorful, but Gujjars also wear stark white shirts some times. **V/Basket:** Gujjars wear over the shirt a *v/basket* (a local name for vest or waist coat), which is invariably black in color. It is decorated with beads and buttons. Sometimes a frill is also used on pockets



and back of the vest. *Tehmat, Salwar*: To cover the lower limbs of the body, Gujjars use *tehmat* or *salwar*. *Tehmat* is an unstitched piece of colored cloth, sometimes check-patterned. It is simply tied on the waist without the help of a string or belt. In winters, Gujjars wear *salwar*. *Khesi*: Gujjars wrap a chaddar around their shoulders. It serves the same function as that of a shawl. This chaddar is of two kinds, one for special occasions and the other for the ordinary wear.

The Gujjars of Poonch and Rajouri exhibit more Afghani influence in their costumes<sup>140</sup>. They wear *kurta*, *shalwar*, *kameej*, *khan dress*, (*v*)*basket*, *lungi*, head dress. The colors of costumes are generally monochrome. (*V*)*Baskets* are white or any other one color. The Gujjars and Bakerwals of Jammu, Samba, Kathua, wear *tehband* or *tehmad*. The (*v*) *basket* is multicolored. For head gear, they use *safa*, which can be white or black in color.

**4.1. Costumes of Gujjar women:** *Head dress*: *Joji* or *topi* worn by Gujjar women is like a bowl turned upside down on their heads. Made of cloth, plaits attached to it or are made to hang as various longitudinal plaits over the back side. *Kurta*: Gujjar women usually wear a loose *kalidaar* black *kurta* upto their knees. This *kurta* is stitched of colorful thread done in criscross stitches on the sides, cuffs and collars. Like their men folk, Gujjar women wear a waist over the *kurta*. *Sutthan, Salwar*: Old Gujjaris wear *churidar sutthan* in Jammu style to cover their legs. In olden times this *sutthan* was made of special cloth *susi*, which was of black color with red stripes. But nowadays most Gujjaris wear *salwar*. *Footwear*: *Desi jutta* was worn by both male and female Gujjars. But in present times with non-availability of



traditional shoemakers who have either changed profession or started using new materials, Gujjars have started wearing new plastic and other modern shoes.

The favorite dresses of Gujjars are (v)*basket*-waist-coat, *shalwar*, *kurta* (long shirt) and *pagri* as headgear (turban) while the women usually wear long gowns called as *jubbo* and *sutthan* (trouser) *kurti* (shirt) and *Tazakastani cap*. The women and children wear caps typical of their brood, small and rimless; they have a broad tail that runs down the base of their necks to their backs. These are made from coarse cotton in a dark hue of black, maroon, blue or red and embroidered with bits of bright cotton yarn interspersed with deep maroon. The motif is typically radial on top, done in a variation of satin stitch with rounds of blanket stitch and herringbone with a flat vertical band forming a rim or sides in chain stitched repetitive motif. The tail is a separate piece with geometric embroidered spaces in running stitch, rows running parallel to form patterns of their own.

The infant caps are embellished with tassels, beads and pom-poms on the rim, sometimes with little coins stitched in. The base cloth here is lighter in colour and all the thread is bright – like pink, yellow, turquoise, emerald to name a few. These do not have the flat tail but have flaps on either side to cover the ears.

The women also wear hand-braided tassels in their hair which is already fashioned into thin even braids that combine to form two thick ones ending in bright, woolen tassels and pom-poms. They also wear broad chokers made from coarse seed beads in glass, hand strung in cotton without using needles. There are also braided cords in wool with pendants made from old coins. Some of the older women wear chunky



metal jewelry made from a mix of metals including tin that makes it look like silver.

They fashion bags and pouches from old clothes and embellish them with their style of embroidery. Their mules are adorned in saddles and blankets with the same embroidered motif and have straps, ribbons and decorations in braided wool and beads.

The Bakerwals too have their distinct style of embroidery, more coarse than the Gujjars with a larger array of stitches and motifs. They also embroider on plastic cement or rice sacks, jute, blankets and pretty much any surface they plan to use in their daily lives. <sup>140</sup>

## 5. Costumes of Paharis

Common Pahari men wear shalwar, kameez and vasket. The elite Paharis wear white shalwar and a shirt of bosaki, black vasket/sadri (waist coat) with costly buttons and a silver chain. The head dress of Hindus as well as Muslims men is called turre-wali-pugree, which is swathed around (fixed) over a specially designed pointed skullcap also called a Afgani Kulla. Paharis also adorn a turban on their heads. Called as Safa, this turban is made of simple, white muslin cloth of three to five meters in length. Another headgear worn by Pahari Muslims is lungi.

The Pahari women wear a simple dress which comprises a shalwar, kameez or treeza wali meezi (pairny) and a headgear such as chaddar or odhni. Khesh, also referred as chippri (kaswa or scarf), socks and sweater are also part of the costume. Women in present times wear chappal or gurgabi, but in remote areas traditional leather footwear called as jora is still in use. Commonly known as jutti, it is made by local



cobblers called as mochi. Muslim women also use burqa, especially on certain occasions. In the rural areas of mixed population of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, the Hindu Rajput women, till recent past used to wear white burqa as part of their dress<sup>141</sup>.

## 6. Gaddi Costumes<sup>142</sup>

*Mens Costume: Chola*— Traditional male Gaddis wear *chola* (or *cholu*), a long loose woolen dress upto their knees and tied round their waist with several rounds with *dora*. Gaddi women also wear similar type of dress called *luanchari*. The *chola* is made up of *patti* (hand spun woolen cloth) and is stitched in such a way that Gaddis during migration keep new born lambs in their *chol*as.

*Dora*:

An important part of Gaddi dress, *dora* is worn over *chola* or *luanchri* round the waist. The maximum length of a female *dora* measures about 50 meters where as for men it may be 10 to 25 meters. It is made of wool and is usually black in colour. *Dora* has multiple reasons and uses. It keeps the waist erect specially while climbing up the hills. It is used as saddle for carrying the load on the back and as rope for carrying luggage. Small articles like leather pouch of tobacco, flute and money bag are tied in it. It has a religious touch as well and Gaddis take it as a sign of Lord Shiva.

*Sutthan/Pyjama*: Legs used to be generally kept naked by men earlier. *Sutthan* or *pyjama* is worn on certain occasions especially on marriages etc. This *pyjama* or *sutthan* is of cotton or wool which is tight below the knees up to ankle and loose above knees. A loose shirt *kurti*, is worn by men under *chola*. This *kurti* or *kurta* is made of cotton cloth.



**Head Gear:** Both cap and turban is used to cover the head. The most common *topi* (cap) is made of woolen piece of cloth and is a round one which is 5 to 6 inches in height. Woolen *topi* which is known as *Bushari topi* in Himachal is also worn. Gaddis are fond of *kalgi* and flowers. They stitch *kalgi* on the *topi* and keep flowers on their turbans especially on marriages and fairs.

**6.1 Gaddi Women Costumes:** *Luanchari*—Women wear *luanchri* which is made of cotton cloth of special pattern and design. Complete *luanchri* reaches down to the ankles and it is worn in the same way as *Chola* is worn by male gaddis. *Chadru* is used by *Gaddans* to cover the head. Mostly it is colored muslin. The approximate length is two meters. Female costume consists of *luanchari*, *Dora* along with a dupatta with frill, called *ghundu*.

**Foot Wear:**

Gaddis mostly wear leather shoes made by local cobblers. Called as *mocharu* or *jutta*, these are rough, heavy and durable shoes. Footwear of ladies, have colorful handicraft designs but are lighter than men's footwear. Previously Gaddi ladies were found bare-footed but now the time has changed and they use *chappals* and shoes especially of plastic.

**Marriage Attire:** During marriages a Gaddi boy (groom) traditionally wears a very fascinating and attractive dress called *kadd* or *luancha*. It is a long red or maroon colored cotton frock with similar colored yolk. It is decorated with different types of mirrors, frills and pippins. The waist of the *Kadd* is tied with a white and yellow cotton piece called a *Patka*. A red or maroon colored shawl is also taken over



the *kadd*. On the head, groom wears a very intricate crown called *sehra* made by local people, consisting of colorful sticks in its circumference.

The Gaddis of Jammu like their counterparts in Himachal Pradesh wear homespun cloth, made out of the produce of their own flock. The headdress of men is a unique cap folded on the forehead, popularly known as Gaddi cap.

The Gaddis wear a simple traditional dress normally. On Special Occasions they wear full traditional dresses with full ornaments. Men also wear white turban, which is a characteristic of the Gaddi dress.

## 7. Bhadarwahi Costumes

With the advent of Scythians in the north western mountainous region and neighboring plains, use of stitched garments became popular in mountainous Western Himalayan region. The long overcoat like loose woolen garment and a round and tall looking cap of the Scythians may be seen still in popular use of Gaddis, who borrowed from the indigenous predecessors. In Bhadarwahis a local variation of long-overcoat like garment is still seen in their ritual dress of long frock like white garment which is worn at the time of Kud dance. The women wear *sutthan* and *kameez*.

## 8. Padari Costumes<sup>143</sup>

Because of the cold climate, natives of Padar use woolen clothes. Men wear a coat made of *pattu* and loose type of pyjama called *suttad*, which is narrow near the ankles. Underneath the coat a loose and long shirt called *kemarri* is worn. Men also support a waist band called *majaehar*. The



cap called as *tot*, owing to its typical design and shape is a tell tale sign of a Padari. The natives also wear a *kantop* (ear cap). In winters, everyone wears woolen socks and wears shoes made of grass and called *pulhe*. Very useful to walk on snow, these shoes are made by womenfolk at home. At present, the grass shoes are being replaced with shoes of modern material.

Women wear shirt, *churidaar* pyjama and a colorful cap called *Joli*. Women also wear *choga*, a loose gown like upper garment which is fastened with a waist band. On top of *choga*, they wear jacket called *merun*.

The costumes worn by Bhots (Buddhist of Padar) are largely similar to the native costumes and do show difference in some aspects. They wear narrow pyjama (*nayama*), loose shirt (*konje*), and a slanted cap (*tishi*). Bhot women wear a woolen costume called as *shuba*, button less long shirt (*hujak*), frock (*toche*), shawl (*lingche*) and waistband (*kira*).



# Ornaments

## 1. Introduction

Women and men in Jammu throughout the ages have been fond of wearing various kinds of ornaments and the practice still continues. Women wear a complete range of traditional jewelry, not only for the enhancement of physical beauty but also as expression of the traditional culture.

Traditional ornaments of Jammu region are a blend of traditional designs and techniques. Ornaments are also a source of communication as a message of love, power, marriage and hierarchy. The richer classes wear gold ornaments while the poor wear jewelry of silver or other inferior metals looking like gold such as brass. Jewelry is not only considered for the purpose of adoration, but also as a security in times of contingency. This is because it is often expensive and can be sold whenever there is a dire need of money.

The Pahari Miniatures paintings offer a good insight into the costumes and ornaments of the elite in late medieval times. The women characters in Pahari miniatures are depicted with a wide range of ornaments such as *chak tikka*, ear-rings, ear pendants, nose pendants, bracelets, bangles and necklaces of gold and rarely of silver. The ornaments shown are profusely studded with pearls and precious stones. These ornaments show many influences like that of Mughal, Rajasthani, Punjabi and local varieties.

## 2. Classification of Ornaments

The ornaments of Jammu may be broadly classified in the following three categories: A) Personal Ornaments B) Costumes Jewelry C) Totemic Ornaments.



(A) **Personal Ornaments:** Worn universally by women since the earliest times, the head, neck, ear and nose, wrist and finger ornaments fall in this category. In Duggar, the young and old women normally wear *koka* or *tilli* or *loun* of gold on the nostrils, *kante* or ear rings for the ears, a gold or silver *chak* as a head ornament and a necklace or a chain of silver and gold finger rings. In the interiors of this region, on the other hand, women put on a heavy load of ear ornament, which even tend to pull down the ear lobes out of shape. The real purpose of such tendential de-shaping may not be known to the people, but the distended ear-lobes have widely been considered as a sign of contemplative mind since the very early times in India. The ornaments are largely made of silver, gold ornaments being very uncommon<sup>144</sup>.

There are other categories of ornaments like, *chauki*, *tabiz*, *tilli*, *chak*, *shingar patti*, *chura*, *pajeb*, *bichhua* etc, which are in vogue in this region under the Indo-Persian influence. Enameling (*Minakari*), which was introduced by Persians in India, is also confined mostly to ornaments of alien origin. In Jammu and Kashmir ornaments mostly made of silver are widely used by the Muslim and Gujjar women. Thus formal plurality, conditioned by various ethnic, socio-cultural and geographic factors, is distinctly discernible in the ornaments and jewelry of Jammu region.

## 2. Head & Neck Ornaments

*Chouunk*, *choowk*, an inverted bowl like hollow ornament made of gold or silver is one of the important head ornaments of womenfolk as it is considered a symbol of *suhaag*, and is must for married women to wear. Normally a *chak* is provided by two chains, called as *phool mali*. The loose ends of *phool mali* are tucked in the hair to keep the *chak* in position on the crown. Other is *shingarpatti*, a gold ornament put around



forehead. It is a wide arrangement of chains made of small flat beads, with pendulum like piece in the centre, which is embellished with studs or enameling. *Maan Tikka* is another head ornament, usually made of gold with red stones in it. A chain is attached to it, which is tucked in hair to keep the *tikka* in position in the middle of the forehead.

Among the neck ornaments, the *haar* (necklace) occupies a prominent position. It is a gold or silver ornament, which sometimes can weigh upto 300 to 400 grams. *Haar* is made of a number of chains, spread over the breast, and hooked together on both ends to the embossed and sometimes enameled, flat piece, cut in floral or geometric designs. A sturdy red chord or chain joins both the ends of the *haar* at the back, into a knot. *Kantha* or *kanthi*, as it is variously called is a necklace of gold or silver beads. Locket is a light weight necklace made of gold or silver chain with a pendant.

### 3. Ear-Ornaments

*Karn-phool* is another ear-top ornament made of silver and popular amongst the poor class. *Kante* are the ear-rings or ear-pendants made of gold or silver in multiform, mostly studded. *Balki* is a simple ear-ring made of gold or silver with two beads in the middle. *Jhumka* is basically a bell shaped ear-pendant made of numerous forma and shapes, with tiny fringes at the lower end. In modern times, the older generation may be found having ears pierced and wearing *neniti* (a round ear- ring).

**3.1. Nose Ornaments:** *Nath* is the most important of all ornaments, for its status as a symbol of *suhaag*. This nose ornament, worn on the left nostril by the Hindu women, and on the right by Muslim women, is always made of gold and other decorative devices are also fitted into it. A chain or red



chord is also attached to it, one of which is hooked in the hair so that the *nath* remains in position, without causing any stress to the nostril. *Laung* is an elaborate and large sized nose-stud. *Koka* or *tilli* is a small nose-stud, with a screwed or capped fixing device. Of late, *tillis* of various forms and sizes are available ready-made in the village shops as a part of costume jewelry. But a *tilli* cannot assume the coveted status as a symbol of *suhaag*.

#### 4. Wrist and Finger ornaments

In Dogra region, *gokharus*—the heavy and chased bracelets of gold or silver—is a popular ornament. Another one is *karohlu*. It is heavy cylindrical rod of silver, turned into a large ring form. Both the ends of *karohlu* are carved into forms of *gaja-mukha* (elephant head), *simha mukha* (lion head) or *makra mukha* (crocodile head), facing each other. This heavy and solid ornament is made of silver, but hollow and light *karohlus*, made of gold are also found in possession of rich families. *Kangan* are the round bracelets of gold or silver and are mostly worn in Bhadarwah, Basohli and Chamba areas. *Churiyan*, three to five, are worn by women in each arm, according to their affordability. *Chura* is a hinged silver ornament profusely embossed and chased, covering the three-quarter of the wrist length. A pin of equal length passes through the loops, made in two halves of the chura, which unlocks and locks it. *Bazuband* made of flexible chains of gold and silver, and a popular wrist ornament of feudal aristocracy, is again making a comeback.

To keep wrists bare of ornaments is considered a bad omen. The women therefore use a variety of glass and plastic bangles in day to day use and avoid wearing costly ornaments on wrists. For fingers, women used to wear *arsis*—a large finger ring with a small mirror fitted into it like a *nag*, so that



one could see one's face. But it is now rarely seen. Besides these, women wear *anguthis* (rings) of gold and silver.

Men generally wear an *anguthi* of gold or silver in their fingers. Many men also wear *anguthis* made of gold, silver, *ashtadhatu* (eight metals), copper, iron, studded or unstudded, on totemic<sup>145</sup> or astrological considerations.

## 6. Foot Ornaments

For foot ornaments, the range is quite small. These are necessarily made of silver and not of gold. Use of gold for foot ornament is a taboo. *Jhanjar* or *panjeb*, a heavy foot ornament, sometimes with tiny *gunghroos*, is worn on ankles.

Traditionally while the women of middle and lower class as well as Gujjar and Gaddi tribal women usually wore silver ornaments, there are also references that women also wore *pittal* (brass) ornaments.

In spite of being exposed to various cross-cultural currents throughout various phases of history, Dogras have continued to show likeness for some traditional designs and shapes in range of ornaments including earrings, necklaces, bracelets, anklets, amulets, rings etc.

The Pahari women wear silver ornaments like *Jhumka*, *Kangan*, *Hasieri* (necklace), *Loung*, *Chhalla*, *Panjebaan* etc, while the men wear silver and golden rings. These ornaments are of typical type, which are distinct from the ornaments of the other tribes residing in the same belt. The Gujjar women wear *mareedae*, *torae*, *jutt*, *basentiyan*, *panjebaan*, *shakuntala chain*, *baalae*, *chumkiyan*.



# Oral Traditions about Trees

## 1. Introduction

Man has depended upon trees for millions of years. In course of evolution, notwithstanding the role of wood-based technologies in civilizing the humans, trees have constantly exerted emotional influence on mankind.

Since the times immemorial, trees, as symbols of life and renewal, wonder and mystery, have been imbued by man with magico-spiritual associations. Therefore trees have acquired an important place in religion, myth, folklore, superstitions and storytelling and stand as powerful cultural symbols in many societies from primitive times to present day.

Many trees are worshipped as gods, or seen as dwelling places of spirits<sup>146</sup>. Groves of trees have become sacred places. Such trees or woods have also become the places where tribal rituals or ceremonies are carried out. Objects made from wood—icons, images, masks, amulets and lucky charms—have also incorporated this magical status to the trees.

Ethnic communities of Duggar, alongside a wide, strong and symbolic system of beliefs about trees, have also evolved in-depth understanding about nature of varied usages of trees and their products.

In Jammu region, local communities and nomadic tribes like Gujjars, Bakerwals, Gaddis, Paharis have many oral traditions which highlight age-old tree and man relationship exemplified in many religious and non-religious rituals, day to day usages of tree-derived products, edible, non-edible, medicinal or of timber value. Several usages of wild as well



as cultivated trees by diverse ethnic communities can be categorized in following categories<sup>147</sup>:

## 2. Sacred trees

Like in other parts of the country, in Jammu region too people have been worshipping trees since times immemorial. Trees and their products are part of rituals and ceremonies. With passage of time various gods and goddess have been associated with different trees like *Bel*, *Rudraksa* (seeds of *Elaeocarpus*) which are taken as close to *Lord Shiva*, *Peepal* to *Lord Vishnu*, *Mango* (*Mangifera indica*) to *Lord Hanuman*, *Asoka* to *Kamadeva*, etc. The wood of the sacred trees like *Bel*, *Bargad*, *Palaah* and *Pipal* is never used as fuel as it invites the wrath of gods.

Trees like *Peepal*, *Mitragyna* (*Ban Kadamb* or *Kaim* in Dogri), Indian Gooseberry (*Amla*), *Mango* (*Amb* in Dogri), Wood apple (*Billpattri* in Dogri), Mesquite (*Jand* in Dogri), Bird Cherry (*Pajja* in Dogri), are considered sacred and used in several religious rituals. For instance the leaves of Parrot Tree locally called *Palaah* are considered *succhhe* (pure) to be used in *shraadha* and rituals related to ancestor worship in Jammu.

Trees like Juniper (*Shukpa* in Ladakhi) and Oleaster (*Serching* in Ladakhi) are sacred to Buddhists and their wood and twigs are used in Monasteries by the Lamas. Trees like Oriental Plane (*Booni*, *Booien* in Kashmiri), Elm (*Brenn* in Kashmiri), *Skimmia* (Kashmiri *Bilpatar* or *Ruspatta*) are used in sacred ceremonies by Kahmiri Pandits.

## 3. Trees with Local Legends

Dogra region has many legends associated with trees



and shrubs. *Rhododendron* locally called *Cheu* or *Madhaal* (*Hadhdulli* in Gojri, Pahari) bears extraordinary beautiful red flowers but is devoid of fragrance. As per Dogra legend, Lord Rama while searching abducted Sita in forests encountered this tree full of elegant and fragrant flowers and asked *Rhododendron* for any clue to trace Sita. Tree replied in arrogance that it is lost in the world of maddening beauty of blooms and has no time to reply to such silly queries. Lord Rama felt disgusted and cursed tree to lose both beauty and fragrance. Later the tree realized its blunder and begged for excuse. Rama restored its gaudy red colour but not its fragrance so that it is always reminded of its folly. Tree legend has a deep moral for children to take care of such lapses and never be arrogant in life whatever the provocation may be.

This legend goes further to narrate that when Lord Rama reached Himalayan *Muskrose* (*Kareer* in Dogri, *Phulwadi* in Gojri), a climber humbly replied that it saw Ravana taking Sita along but in absence of thorns, it could not catch hold of the abductor and rescue Sita. Rama felt pleased and in turn gifted sharp spines to stems and maddening fragrance to blooms so that in future it can protect itself better and not feel weaponless in times of exigency.

#### 4. Trees in Sacred Groves

People have worshipped forests right from the Paleolithic age, thereby preserving them. Sacred groves are group of trees or part of a forest dedicated to deities and held sacred by local communities. These trees are protected and also worshipped. Sacred groves are in fact ancient natural sanctuaries where trees and associated fauna is preserved through a tradition based on religious custom and tradition.



In Jammu region there are many such sacred groves which since olden times have been traditional sites of cultic and ritualistic practices related to folk deities. A *dehra* or an idol of folk deity in hilly areas of Duggar is mostly located amidst a thick cluster of trees with or without *baolies* (fresh water springs). Such a place is called as *banie*. The deity is considered as owner and guardian of the spot. No one is allowed to cut the trees, take away the wood, grass, leaves from here. It is a well known folk belief that anyone who does so, suffers from the wrath of the *devta*. This belief had till recent times played an important role in preservation of such tree clusters.

## 5. Trees in places of worship

Just as various animals are associated with gods and goddesses, different trees and plants are also linked to sacred religious places and structures. With the result most of the religious places such as temples, mosques, mazars, gurudwaras have a tree or trees considered sacred.

Some of such examples in Jammu region include the Narsingh Dev Temple, Hiranagar where Peepal, *Curry patta*, *Neem* are sacred. At the *Nag Devta*, Nagbani near Jammu, *Kachnar*, *Dhraink*, *Palash*, *Siris*, *Amb* are protected; at the *Nag Devta* temple, Saruinsar, trees like Wild Palm, *Sheesham*, *Dhamman*, *Goolar* are treated as sacred; at Airwan, Kathua in a Shiv Temple, trees like *Rohini* (*Kamilla*), *Siris* (*Sareen*), *Kachnaar* (*Katraid*), *Karounda* (*Garna* or *Garounda*), *Jhingini* (*Kaimbal* or *Gadhaambal*), *Kathneem* (*Darouunkal*) are protected out of faith and reverence; at Sungli, Bhadarwah, *Kali Nag* is associated with a sacred Ash tree (*Sinnu* in Pahari). Taking some instances from



Doda mountains, wild olive trees (*Kauha* in Dogri) at a place called Ganeeka, *Deodar* and *Kail* trees at Duaalkund, *Kail* trees at Lal Dramman are associated with Nag Devta; Moru Oak trees at Kotwali Bajarni is associated with *Gharveer Devta*.

The *ber* tree in the courtyard of Panjvakhtar temple, Jammu, is venerated till today. As per folklore Guru Nanak Devi ji during his visit to Jammu had sat under the very tree and gave sermon to the local Dogra Raja Khokhar Dev.

Peer Baba shrines at several places in Jammu are associated with trees. For example, Peer Baba at Mandaal near Jammu has 200 years old *Bargad* tree (*Bohd* in Dogri ), at *Keuli* 500 years old *Peepal* tree ( *Bad* in Dogri) exists; at *Bandraal Khurd* 150 years old *Jamun* tree (*Dhallan*) and at *Gargaal*, old *Ber* and *Kakoi* trees are venerated.

Similarly at *mazar* of *Bhallo Baba* near Mathwar, trees of *Mango*, *Peepal*, *Amaltaas*, *Ber*, *Tun*, *Jhingani* are treated sacred; at Shahdara Shrief, Rajouri, a sacred Citrus tree in addition to Chinar and Oak trees are sacrosanct in the shrine; In Doda area, Kharsoo Oak trees at Bhagwa is associated with Peer Baba and *Kail*, *Deodar*, *Fir* Trees associated with a mosque at Dessa.

## 6. Folk Belief in Magico-Religious Powers of Vegetation

Plants are used in many ways in folk societies including worshipping gods and goddesses for the protection and betterment of human life. Various plant parts like bark, twigs, leaves, flowers, fruits and seeds are offered to gods. There are many plants grown near the different religious institutions and regarded as sacred plants by different ethnic groups of the Jammu who preserve the plants by all means



which are used in different rituals. One of the aspects of great traditional knowledge base in plant resources in Jammu region is the folk belief in magico-religious powers of vegetation.

Some of the vegetations are considered as poisonous. Some are used in black magic practices by administering the vegetations in powder form to individuals. Some herbs are known to make people unconscious and requiring an antidote to mitigate the effect. But common folks hardly know about such herbs/shrubs etc.

There is a group of plants, trees, which is considered to help fight evil actions of *Jognis* and *Dains*. In Bhadarwah areas, people hang leaf-laden branches of *Banaa*, *Kareer*, on doors, windows and all kinds of air vents in the house. On Diwali day even the posts of furniture and cots are also tied with the leaves of *Banaa*. This is done as per the belief that *Joganis*, who take an aerial route to go to Kaplash Kund, release their *baan*- arrows on houses, gardens, fields etc. Even in fields, *Banna* branch is inserted in one corner to ward off evil eyes, magic of *Joganis*.

A folk saying amply reflecting upon the great magico-religious importance is attached to *Banaa*, especially the *Panj-Pattra* is as under: *Panj Pattra Banna, So Daini, Ik Janna/* Five-leaf *Banna* is like one brave man against hundred *Dains*. *Banaa* is regularly used by *chleas*, *doalaas*, who use it for doing *phaanda*. Some people plant *Banaa* to ward off the bad effects of black magic. The other interesting use of *Banaa* leaves is when curd does not curdle in a vessel or goes sticky type, the vessel is washed with *Banna* leaves to remove its repelling effect.

*Brainkad*: This tree, along with *Nimm* (Neem), is



used for doing *phaanda*. *Mor Muttha*: (bunch of Peacock Feathers) also called as *mor chhar*, is related to the age-old fear of snakes which led to the Naga worship. In case of a snake bite, *phaanda* is done by *more-muttha*. In course of time *mor-muttha* was also put in use by *chelas* and slowly it was also used as fly-whisk to wave over the idols of *devtas*. *Sapkanj* (skin shed by a snake), *more pankh* is also put in books for enhancement of *Vidya* (knowledge and learning as opposed to *avidya*-ignorance).

## 7. Trees as Medicinal Sources

Most important medicinal trees of Jammu province are three kinds of Myrobalans and they are Emblic Myrobalan (*Amla*), Belleric Myrobalan (*Baheda*) and Chebulic Myrobalan (*Hareed*), in addition to Arjun Myrobalan. *Kogad*: Easter Tree or Ivory Tree locally named as *Kogad* and scientifically identified as *Holarhaena Pubescens* is another tree of great therapeutic value. Its bark is described as acrid, anthelmintic, bitter dry and pungent, which is used to cure diarrhoea, fever, piles, leprosy, thirst, skin-disease, biliousness and diseases of spleen. Its seeds are known as appetizer, bitter antithelmintic and cooling and are used to cure pains, dysentery, burning sensation, bleeding piles and fatigue<sup>148</sup>.

***Kikkar and Phalaai***: Common *Babool* locally called *Kikkar* or that from Amritsar Gum Tree locally called *Phulaai* are other trees whose use in folk medicines is age old. Various parts of *Kikar* are useful in diarrhoea. The leaves and the bark are useful in arresting secretion or bleeding. The pods help remove catarrhal matter and phlegm from the bronchial



tubes. The gum allays any irritation of the skin and soothes the inflamed membranes of the pharynx, alimentary canal and genito-urinary organs. Fresh pods of babul tree are effective in sexual disorders like spermatorrhoea, frequent night discharges, loss of viscosity of the semen and premature ejaculation<sup>149</sup>. Gum is also obtained from *Kikkar* and *Phalaai*.

**Medda Sakk or Rehan:** Chinese Litsea locally named as *Medda Sakk* or *Rehan* is again very useful traditional medicinal tree. Its powdered bark is useful in the treatment of Osteoporosis and Joint pains. Seed oil obtained from Castor plant (*Airan*), Drumstick tree (*Sohaanjana*), Monkey Face Tree (*Kamilla*) is considered medicinal by the natives as well as Ayurveda Practitioners. Fruits of many trees like Bengal Quince locally named *Baelpatter*, Horse chestnut Tree locally named *Goon* or *Guggu* or *Bankhodi* or *Haandun*, Emetic nut Tree locally named as *Raada* are employed by locals for treatment of many disorders and body ailments.

**Kakohaa:** Governor's Plum locally named as *Kakohaa* is considered beneficial in Jaundice. *Garna* or *Garaunda*: Christ's thorn locally named *Garna* or *Garaunda* is useful in anemia. *Kaodachh* or *Kaimbloo*: Barberry locally named *Kaodachh* or *Kaimbloo* is useful as hepato-protective.

## 8. Wild Fruits and Vegetables

The rich biological diversity of the Jammu region is utilized by local communities in a variety of ways. Edible wild plants are common food resources. Barks, flowers, roots, fruits, leaves, twigs, young shoots, seeds and tubers



are primary foods. With the result wild fruit have been fondly relished by the tribal and non-tribal communities since olden times.

Herbs make up the highest proportion of the edible species, followed by tree, shrubs and climbers in descending order. The edible plants are consumed in many different ways, some of them needing only washing of the part or no washing. Some others simply a more or less complex preparation process. Major components of the wild species are used as fruits. Some species yield edible flowers, while other's fleshy stems are eaten, mostly in salads. Another major proportion of the collected plants are cooked and used as vegetables. Regarding the collection and use of the edible plants, most of the fruits and seeds are collected and immediately used by children. Such foraging activities provide essential supplies of vitamins and minerals to the children. On the other hand collection and preparation of leafy edibles is limited to the women and young girls. The dishes prepared from these are consumed by all groups of the people<sup>150</sup> in rural areas.

Though, the fast changing lifestyle and influence of urban culture is leading the younger generation in urban centers and nearby rural pockets away from the uses of wild edible plant species, it's use is still popular among tribals such as Gujjars, Bakerwals, Gaddis and Sippis. The preservation of knowledge appears to be the result of continued reliance of tribes on the wild edible plants as most of the wild edible species are used by children, young girls and womenfolk of the tribe. Utility of these plants by younger members of the tribe ensures the maintenance of indigenous knowledge associated with the species.



## 9. Edible Wild Fruits

Richer in nutritional composition than cultivated fruits, some edible fruits of wild plants which are relished by local communities, especially children, in Jammu region are: *Gruch*, *Akhray* (*Berberis aristata*), *Simbul*, *Kambli* (*Berberis lyceum*), *Granda* (*arissa spinarum* Linn.), *Khrikh* (*Celtis australis* Linn.), *Amlok* (*Diospyros lotus* Linn.), *Kunkoli* (*Elaeagnus umberllata* Linn.), *Kamari/Phagwari* (*Ficus Palmata*), *Jal bamun/Kunchi* (*Fragaria nubicola*), *Dhaman* (*Grewia optiva*), *Akhor* (*Junglans regia*), *Toot* (*Morus alba*), *Sia Toot* (*Morus nigra*), *Khajuri* (*phoenix acaulis*), *Ban Kakari* (*Podophyllum hexandrum*), *Haari/Swari* (*Prunus armeniaca*), *Druny* (*Punica granatum*), *Batangi* (*Pyrus pashia*), *Pakna/Chanch* (*Rubus fruticosus*), *Kachmach* (*Solanum nigrum*) and *Kakhari* (*Solena heterophylla*). *Jamun* (*Syzygium cumin*), *Kuch Gauch* (*Viburnum grandiflorum*), and also the fruits of the family Rhamnaceae like *Ber*, *Beri*, *Brion* etc. *Phagwada*: Edible Fig locally named *Phagwada* is rich in minerals and iron. *Kainth* and *Bharath*, Wild Monkey Pear locally named as *Kainth*, Bird Cherry locally named *Bharath* are some other wild fruits popular among native communities inhabiting the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

## 10. Edible Wild Plants as Vegetables

Leaves and twigs of *Chaleri*, *Ghanar* (*Amaranthus caudatus* Linn.), *Chmso* (*Capsella bursa-pasoris*), young fronds of *Ksrer/Kasrod* (*Diplazium esculentum*), young leaves and fronds of *Jatla Kandor* (*Diplazium frondosum*), *Phopra* (*Fagopyrum dibotrys*), *Sonchal* (*Malva sylvestris*), *Pat Guchhi* (*Morchella esculenta*), *Chho* (*Nastrutium officinale*)-leaves, *Khatti Hulli* (*Oxalis corniculata*) –whole



plant, *Chamchi Pattar* (*Plantago lanceolata*)-leaves, young shoots of *Chalasaag* (*Potamogetum perfoliatum*), fleshy shoots of *Palwari* (*Rosa indica*), whole plants of Hand (*Taraxacum officinale*), Khatti Imbal and Khatti Hulli of the family Oxalidaceae, vegetables of *Panjali Hulli*, (*Rumex acetosa*), *Kali Hulli* (*Rumex maritimus*), *Hulla* (*Rumex nepalensis*), the tubes of *Tarar* (*Dioscorea belophylla*) are usually used as vegetables or pickles.

### **11. Trees, plants, Shrubs, Herbs as Spices and Condiments**

The term spices and condiments applies to such natural plants or vegetable products and mixtures thereof, used in whole or ground form, mainly for imparting flavor, aroma and piquancy to foods and also for seasoning of food beverages. Native communities in Jammu and Kashmir, like elsewhere in the country, since olden times have created a storehouse of traditional knowledge about the use of wild trees, plants, herbs and shrubs as spices and condiments in day to day cuisine.

Some of the wild trees, plants, herbs and shrubs whose parts like barks, fruits, seeds, roots are used as spices and condiments are: Indian Cinnamon, (*Cinnamomum Tamala*) locally called *Tajpatter* or *Tejpat*, the aromatic leaf finds use as a flavoring agent. Toothache Tree locally named *Timbru* is popular among Gujjars and Paharis as useful spice and flavoring agent. Curry leaf tree named *Draunkal* in Dogri is another tree or shrub whose leaves are added to various dishes for flavor and as spice. Hill Varnish Tree locally popular under the name *Tittri* is famous among Gujjars and Paharis as substitute of Tamarind and used in various native dishes as souring agent.



## 12. Trees as a source of dyes

Before the advent of synthetic dyes, the flowers of Parrot Tree or Flame of The Forest locally called *Tatoohey* were very popular as dye among dyers of Jammu region. Similarly natural Indigo dye once popular among natives got replaced by synthetic Indigo of commerce. Flowers of *Rhododendron* locally called *Had-dull* or *Cheu* or *Madhaal* or *Buraans* are a source of Holi colour among natives of Bani, Basohli, Chamba and Kangra.

Dyes obtained from flowers of Persian Lilac locally called *Dhraink*, Tree of Sadness locally named as *Koori* or *Karoom* or *Harshringaar* were once popular but over the years, the ready availability of synthetic dyes in market, have made them less popular. Similarly dyes extracted from blooms of flower locally called *Kasumba* and *Mirchala* (*Solanum pseudocapsicum*) were also once popular among natives but not so at present. The dye made out of the bark of *Karoangal* (*Amaltaas*) is used to color leather. The bark and seeds of *Kikar* are a source of tannin.

## 13. Trees as a source of dining cups and plates

Disposable leaf cups and plates were traditionally made by hand in villages of Duggar. Such cups and plates were used for serving food in marriages and religious and social functions. In Jammu region Woody Liana, Camel foot climber locally named as *Maloongad* or *Baloongad* has remained very popular among Dogras and Paharis as a source of foliar cup and dinner plates. Leaves of Parrot Tree locally called *Palaah*, Eve's Apron Fig locally called *Trimbal* are also used for making eco-friendly dinner cups since times immemorial. The leaves of Banyan (*Bohd*) tree are also used



for making plates and cups. But this traditional usage of leaf cups and plates barring selected religious functions in villages is on the decline among the natives as markets are flooded with non-biodegradable plastic especially in towns and cities. The modern material is not only an environmental hazard but also puts a question mark on continuation of eco-friendly traditional occupation.

#### 14. Trees with poisons

Nomadic and other communities are well acquainted with poisonous nature of several trees. The traditional wisdom accumulated over many generations has categorized several plants as poisonous. Apart from several poisonous herbs like *Patrees*, *Mahura*, *Sapp dode* ( *Surin* in Kashmiri, *Surganda* in Gojri ), some poisonous shrubs like *Maddereyian* ( *Mordi* in Gojri), *Ganeehra* ( *Gandheela*), *Sarangad* ( *Janga* in Gojri), some trees like *Tung* ( *Bhaan* in Pahadi), *Arkhal* or *Urkhall* ( *Holaash* in Gojri), *Rimman* or *Allan* ( *Ratankaath* in Gojri) are also poisonous and are avoided by cattle and humans.

**14.1. Trees with fibers :** Well known fiber tree is Opposite Leaved Cross berry Tree locally called *Dhamman*. Its twigs are immersed in stagnant ponds for rotting and fiber is obtained to make use for ropes, country cots ( *Khatt* in Dogri, Gojri) and swings ( *Peengh* in Dogri ). Agave, locally called *Keoda* is another source of local fiber which is obtained from its succulent leaves.

**14.2. Trees for agricultural implements:** Lesser known trees are used traditionally for making several tools and implements



by the nomads and farmers. Trees like White berry (*Raathal*, *Rathain*, *Rathaiee* in Gojri / Dogri), Himalayan Honey suckle (*Bakkdu*, *Bkdu*, *Makoda*, *Dadroon*), Bladder nut (*Chitra* in Dogri), Wild Olive (*Kahoo*) are prized for making country staffs. Glandular Olive (*Neelan* in Dogri), Common Oak (*Banj* in Dogri, Gojri), Sandan tree (*Sannan*), *Khair*, etc are used for making country ploughs, yokes and paddy rakers. Wood of Wild Varnish Tree (*Urkhall*, *Arkhad*) is used for making country drums and apiary boxes (boxes for keeping bees).



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- 12 4 [https://www.maavaishnodevi.org/mata\\_vaishno\\_devi\\_ji](https://www.maavaishnodevi.org/mata_vaishno_devi_ji)
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- 14 There are many versions of this myth about Arjuna and his exploits during the exile.
- 15 *Sanatan Dharma, meaning eternal dharma is the alterative native name for Hinduism. The term was coined during the Hindu revivalism movement and nascent Hindu nationalism. In current-day usage, the term Sanatana Dharma is used to emphasize an 'orthodox' or sanatani (eternalist) outlook in contrast to the socio-cultural Hinduism embraced by movements such as the Arya Samaj.*
- 16 A *kula* is a set of people following similar cultural rituals.
- 17 Folk songs sung at the time of festive moments like child birth, marriage etc.
- 18 The word *sagan* has many meanings like auspicious moment,



gifts like coconut, etc.

- 19 *Shikha* is only mandatory when the child is Brahmin by caste.
- 20 *Dreyaas* is a wooden chowki in the form of a temple. A *Supari*, Ganaesh murti and *khumb* with a lid, earthen lamp are kept in it.
- 21 *Vadiyaan* are spiced & sun dried dumplings made from ground lentils which can be added to vegetables and curries.
- 22 *Babroos* are traditional leavened fried breads.
- 23 *Vaitarna* or *Vaitarani* river is a mythical river. As mentioned in the Garuda Purana and various other Hindu religious texts, it lies between the earth and the infernal *Naraka*, the realm of Yama, Hindu god of death and is believed to purify one's sins. Furthermore, while the righteous see it filled with nectar-like water, the sinful see it filled with blood. Sinful souls are supposed to cross this river after death. According to the Garuda Purana, this river falls on the path leading to the Southern Gate of the city of Yama. It is also mentioned that only the sinful souls come via the southern gate. A sinner who has done certain meritorious deeds can get a boat to cross the river after travelling on the terrible way of Yama for some time. These deeds include donating a cow, food, wealth or any sacrifice etc.
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- 35 Ibid, p.3.
- 36 Ibid, p. 4.
- 37 Ibid. p.-4.
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- 40 The oldest and historic Gurudwaras in J&K, commemorate the visits to the spot by Sikh Gurus. Gurudwaras of Mattan and Anant Nag are associated with Guru Nanak Dev ji's visit to Kashmir, Shri Chand Math, Residency Road, Srinagar, is connected with Shri Ram Chand's (son of Guru Nanak Dev) visit, while Gurudwara of Chhatti Padshahi commemorates the visit of Guru Shri Har Gobind (1595-1644), the sixth Guru who came to Kashmir during reign of Mughal emperor Jahangir. It was during his visit to Mattan, in Kashmir that Guru Teg Bahadur was approached by Kirpa Ram, a Mirpuri Mohyal Brahmin, to rid the valley of Kashmir from the oppressive rule of the then Moughal governor and which ultimately led him to sacrifice his own life, facing down Emperor Aurangzeb on behalf of the Kashmiri Hindus.
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including Sri Lanka. During the Third Udasi (1514–1516) Guru Nanak traveled to the Gangetic plains, Bihar, Nepal, Lhasa, Leh, as far as Tashkent and then back to Punjab via the Kashmir valley. The Fourth Udasi (1518–1521) took him to various Arab countries. Fifth Udasi (1523–1524 AD) lasted about 2 years and covered the towns and places within the Punjab.

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- 96 Ashish Saxsena, Religion, Caste, Community: 'A Sociological exploration of 'maile'' congregations among Dogra community of Jammu Region''.
- 97 Symbolic or suggestive rather than literally representational: not made or designed as a likeness, trees, boulders and other aniconic objects of primitive worship: without idols or images : opposed to the use of idols or images.
- 98 Mrinalini Atrey, *Deity, Cult, Rituals & Oral Traditions in Jammu*, Saksham Printers, Jammu, 2008.p.3.
- 99 Om Goswami, ----- Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, P.G. Dept. of Dogri , University of Jammu.
- 100 A fixed circle of persons in a Hindu caste system whom a member of an occupational group (as a, jogi, pandit, barber etc.) serves as an exclusive and hereditary right.
- 101 There are many branches of the *Yoga Vidya*. Each branch contains within it a system for practicing yoga and attaining its benefits. For example, *hatha yoga* is the science of connection to the body and vitality in order to attain health and mastery of the body; *mantra yoga* is the science of connection to powerful cosmic forces that vibrate and create the universe.
- 102 *Kurmein Da Lahma*, Pehla Phull--B. P. Sathe's Anthology of Dogri Short Stories, p. 9.
- 103 *Op Cit.* Om Goswami.
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- 124 Kamal Prasad Sharma, Folk Dances of Chamba. Indus Publishing, New Delhi. P. 64
- 125 *Op Cit.* Prof Satya Pal Srivatysa.
- 126 *Op Cit.* Kamal Prasad Sharma, P. 64.
- 127 Boliyaan is most common type of Punjabi folk songs. Its short form is called *tappa* ( pl. *tappe*), a couplet which is sung by an individual, ease verse in at increasing pace, and the *boli's* culminating line is repeated by the group.
- 128 *Op Cit.* Prof Sat Pal Srivatsya
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- 136 *Op Cit.* Shailendra Singh Jamwal.
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